

**THE GUIDE TO MANUSCRIPTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
RELATING TO AUSTRALIA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC;
AN OUTLINE OF ITS SCOPE AND WORKING METHODS.**

by

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The time-consuming searches made by scholars to trace relevant source material, frequently retracing ground covered by other scholars, has led to a demand for union lists and guides to source material on an area basis which will help to lead workers to relevant material in all fields of historical research. By 1961 just such a demand had emerged for a systematic and scholarly survey of source material in the United Kingdom which related to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Moreover a stage had been reached in the Australian Joint Copying Project where such a survey was needed to show how the Project would develop within the United Kingdom when copying at the Public Record Office drew to a close. The possibility of a survey was discussed by the then National Librarian, Mr. (now Sir) Harold White, and the former Mitchell Librarian, Miss Mander Jones, when the former was on a visit to London in 1961; subsequently, a proposal was made by Sir Keith Hancock, the Director of the Research School of Social Sciences, A.N.U., that that University and the National Library of Australia participate in a project to undertake a survey, which would be published. Phyllis Mander Jones, after retiring from the Mitchell Library, had acted firstly as Liaison Officer for the Library of New South Wales in London, and latterly as Joint Copying Project Officer. On her return to Australia she was involved in the discussions which led to a firm agreement on behalf of the two institutions, the National Library and the Australian National University, to embark on the survey, with Miss Mander Jones as Director. Work commenced in December 1964. The survey was initially to take three years, though it was envisaged at the beginning that further time might be necessary, and in fact it has been extended by two and a half years. The main work was completed by August 1970 but the completion of the indexing has still to be done, and this is not possible till the text of the Guide has been set up.

Scope

The purpose of the published Guide is to give the location and a description of unpublished source material in the United Kingdom and Ireland relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; source material that is of significance in the study of the economic, political, geographical and social history of the area. The emphasis is on manuscript, typescript, duplicated and other written unpublished material, but drawings, sketches and maps are also included.

The area covered by the Guide includes Australia and New Zealand, New

Guinea, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, the Antarctic, and the sub-antarctic islands in the Southern Pacific and Indian Oceans. It also includes other islands in the Indian Ocean falling under Australian influence, notably the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. It excludes Indonesia and the Philippines.

The continental areas of Asia, the Americas and Africa are included only when it is necessary in order to give a coherent description. This is particularly necessary in the case of ships trading between Australia, the Pacific Islands, China and America and in the case of records which relate to the naval stations; the East Indies and China stations and the South American station based firstly on Rio de Janeiro and later on Valparaiso.

You may wonder why the area covered by the Guide does not exactly match that of the Joint Copying Project. This is because South East Asia, including Indonesia, has already been covered by Wainwright and Matthews' work, A guide to Western manuscripts and documents in the British Isles relating to South and South East Asia.

Confusion sometimes arises between the Guide to manuscripts in the United Kingdom relating to Australia and the Pacific, the Joint Copying Project, and the Guide to collections of manuscripts relating to Australia, and it might be useful to differentiate between them.

The purpose of the Guide (the subject of this paper) is, as I have said, to identify and describe original sources in the United Kingdom and Ireland which relate to Australia and the Pacific. It is sponsored jointly by the National Library and the Australian National University. The Joint Copying Project, which is sponsored by the National Library and the Library of New South Wales, aims to microfilm material in the United Kingdom and later in Europe which relates to Australia, the Pacific and South East Asia. The Guide to collections is a union list of manuscripts already held in Australian archival and library institutions, issued in instalments by the National Library on the basis of entries provided by the contributing institutions.

One may ask, "If the Joint Copying Project is undertaking the actual micro-filming of original source material, why is it necessary to have the Guide?" For one reason, it may be a considerable time before filming is completed in the United Kingdom. The Guide will provide a useful interim tool for scholars, and it will also provide a concise general picture which will be of continuing use in conjunction with any detailed indexes to the microfilms produced by the Joint Copying Project. Moreover, it will not be possible for the Copying Project officers to microfilm some relevant material in the United Kingdom, either because its owners will not allow filming or because it is too diffuse for it to be filmed economically. Examples of this are the records of the Exchequer and Audit Office and those of the Paymaster General, to be found in the Public Record Office. Filming of parts of these series will be possible but it will not be feasible to film most of the ledgers which contain only isolated entries relating to the area; yet it is meaningless to film the individual

entries in isolation from their context as their relevance cannot be understood without seeing under what headings and sub-headings they have been entered. The Guide draws attention to such ledgers and their contents. Another example of material which cannot economically be filmed but whose locations can be pin-pointed are the many deposits of court records relating to convicts transported to Australia.

Co-operation between the Guide to Manuscripts and the Joint Copying Project was close as the Guide forged ahead in identifying new material to be copied; and in fact the Joint Copying Project officer sometimes worked on a particular set of records with a Guide researcher as this approach proved economical to both operations. The Guide in its final form broadly indicates in which cases the material has been microfilmed, transcribed, or otherwise copied. Readers of this article will probably be aware that a project is under way in the National Library to provide yet another guide – this time a guide to the microfilm reels compiled under the Joint Copying Project. To lessen the confusion, however, this publication has been re-named the Handbook to the Joint Copying Project.

Staffing

The Guide survey began in late 1964 with Phyllis Mander Jones as Director. The Director had substantial control of the work, guided by the National Librarian and the History Department, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University. Administrative details relating to staff were controlled under the High Commissioner's Act by the Australian High Commission in London through the National Library's Liaison Officer there. A panel of advisers was also appointed, assisting with counsel, introductions and other help when necessary. They were Professor Asa Briggs, Dr. R.M. Hartwell of Nuffield College, Oxford, Dr. C.S.R. Kitson-Clark, of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Mr. A.T. Milne, of the Institute of Historical Research, London University. The National Library's London Liaison Officer was also a member of the panel.

Staff for the Guide was to include, in addition to the Director, a full-time assistant editor and a secretary. The first assistant editor, Mrs. Judy Iltis, was unable to continue full-time work after five months and joined the band of part-time researchers, there being no assistant editor until 1967 when the present writer was seconded to the Guide from the National Library for a year. In 1968 Mr. Lindsay Cleland of the National Library and Miss Margaret Pamplin, an English archivist, became assistant editors.

From the beginning, part-time researchers were employed. They were Australian and New Zealand librarians or scholars on leave in England and they worked for anything from half a day to thirty hours a week for periods ranging from a month to several years. This system was not as unsatisfactory as it sounds. It was possible to employ people with special subject interests on material relating to their fields, thus gaining the benefit of their knowledge. For example, a scholar working on early Fijian history surveyed the material relating to Fiji amongst the Foreign Office records, a New Zealander studying in England for

ordination surveyed the records of an early Bishop of New Zealand who had been the subject of his M.A. thesis, and a lecturer from an Australian university who was interested in the coal trade undertook a survey of certain business archives which were relevant to his research. However, the oversight of their work made considerable calls on the Director's time.

Method of work

When the survey began in late 1964 a considerable amount of information was available in various forms. Before beginning work on the Guide Miss Mander Jones had been given a Visiting Fellowship by the Australian National University. This was to enable her to consolidate information about manuscripts in the United Kingdom which had already been collected by libraries and universities in Australia and New Zealand. The information she discovered was listed by area, subdivided by institution. At the Guide office this list was divided out into files for the various counties of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. In counties such as Middlesex and Oxfordshire the files were subdivided by institution. Information from other sources was added to these files. Over the years of its operation the Joint Copying Project has amassed notes on material which has been microfilmed and on material to be investigated and copies of these notes were added. Wainwright and Matthews graciously provided us with notes on material pertinent to our area which had been collected but not included in their South East Asian Guide.¹ Many individuals gave valuable advice and information, and all these supplementary notes were added to the regional and institutional files.

Once the Guide was under way a detailed search through the catalogues and uncatalogued reports of the National Register of Archives was undertaken. The National Register of Archives is the central point where reports on records in the public and private repositories of the United Kingdom can be studied. The search revealed a mass of information and this was also added to the files. The National Register provided continuing valuable help throughout the survey by informing us of any items of interest which they found in incoming reports.

When a researcher began work on a repository or county he or she first examined the relevant files, and also went to the British Museum, the London Library, or some other central library to check any published catalogues, calendars, lists or guides which might be available for the collection concerned. The information thus gained was generally co-ordinated into a preliminary report. An approach was then made to the institution or individual, explaining the aim of the Guide, asking permission to prepare entries and introducing the researcher. In the case of institutions it was usual to send the preliminary report with the letter. In some few cases the reply came that the list in fact contained all material known to be held, with corrections of the entries where necessary. A visit was thus saved; unfortunately, in terms of time, this did not happen very often. Once approval had been obtained the researcher visited the institution. In such a large institution as the Public Record

1. M.D. Wainwright and Noel Matthews (eds) A guide to Western manuscripts and documents in the British Isles relating to South and South East Asia. 1965

Office the Keeper of Records was aware of our project but the day to day contact was with the Assistant Keepers in charge of Reading Rooms who provided advice and considerable assistance in moving quickly through the enormous mass of material to be surveyed, in ways not always available to the ordinary user. In a relatively small institution such as a County Record Office one might arrive to find that the Archivist was out taking a local group over a Roman site but that the rest of the staff was busily searching for Australiana and Pacificana. Incidentally, one was always coming across reminders that though we tend to think of 1788 as remote and somewhat ancient history, to British archivists our material is modern and some scarcely consider it even historical at this point of time.

The kindness and help given by most archivists one met was boundless, and even included keeping the office open at night as long as one cared to work. In some offices one might be introduced to other researchers who would be able to provide clues to material elsewhere, or one might be taken off to meet a local inhabitant whose forebears went to Australia and who might know of some family papers.

My favorite memory is of a meeting with such a descendant in Canterbury Cathedral. The Librarian, the Marlovian scholar Dr. Urry, was very disappointed that we could not trace anything relating to Broughton or Gipps, who were both scholars at Kings School, Canterbury, and who have memorials in the Cathedral. However, during the afternoon he considered that he had retrieved the situation as he took me to stand in the centre of the ancient but beautifully restored Cathedral Library, and bellowed "Boy, come here!" Out of one of the bays emerged a small boy in Kings' uniform who was introduced as Gipps the youngest. Ordered by Dr. Urry to "Talk, boy" he promptly lost his tongue, but later recovered it to tell me about the lack, regrettably, of family records relating to his eminent forebear, and to confide that he loved manuscripts, helped Dr. Urry when he was allowed, and hoped to work in a library when he grew up.

To return to the method of work – the researcher examined all material produced for him and material traced through the catalogues.

Following the examination of the material, a report was drawn up. This sometimes necessitated a further visit to check details. The reports follow the same form. A brief description of the institution and its overall collections is followed by a description of any indexes, catalogues, calendars or other guides; a note is made of any significant publication of the records or published works drawing heavily on the records and any further bibliographical information which may be useful. The description of the relevant records follows. The descriptions vary in detail. The enormous collections of the Public Record Office could not in the time and space allotted to the Guide be described in any detail and it is impossible in the very brief descriptions to avoid uneven emphasis or coverage. This depended so much on the individual searcher, his own knowledge and the material contained in the relatively tiny proportion of material in each class the searcher could look at. It is not possible to do more than refer to the fact that

material on gold and goldfields is contained in the Treasury papers where there is a mass of material on the subject, but in the case of a relatively small collection, for instance, of the Chester City Archives, it is possible to give a brief description of about fifty letters from a son on the gold diggings of Australia and New Zealand to his parents in Chester – a study in declining hope and eventual death in poverty. Such variation is impossible to avoid and is not illogical. The larger and better known repositories will be visited by the scholar almost automatically and the relatively general descriptions will still lead him to particular classes of material. Only detailed indexing by the institutions concerned can take all the pain out of his work. However, he will think twice about visiting places outside the main areas of scholarship unless he knows something worth his while is to be found there, and the relatively more detailed descriptions in the Guide will help him considerably in deciding where useful material is to be found.

On the completion of the reports, each one was checked by the Director and then typed as a final draft, copies being sent to the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia. Copies were also kept for any subsequent corrections or additions, for final editing and for use by interested scholars or institutions in the United Kingdom. Approval of the final form of the entry was sought from the various institutions and owners when the manuscript was being edited for publication. It was hoped that the holding body would, where necessary, take the opportunity to up-date the descriptions by adding new accessions or items discovered in the course of cataloguing previously uncatalogued collections. This was particularly useful in the case of reports prepared in the early days of the Survey. An index on cards was prepared for each report. This work was carried out largely by the then Secretary of the Guide, Miss Joan Pilbeam who in addition to being a typist has State Library of Tasmania training qualifications. Her work was normally checked by the co-editor. The index is by name, place and subject, the latter consisting of very broad entries. Completion of the indexing, however, will not take place until the main text is set in type.

Considerable consultation was needed between the checker and the Director as the various guides and reliable works used as authorities for the index did not always provide a useful precedent or an answer to problems.

Before the cards for the index of a particular report were filed a typescript copy of the index was made and attached to the report to facilitate revisions and additions where the original text was altered.

The form of entry follows that adopted by Crick and Alman² from whom the Guide received valuable help and advice, particularly from Mrs. Alman. As far as possible the descriptions follow the arrangement by which the material is filed. However, some form of classified order is used in describing larger collections, for example the records of the Colonial Office, where such an arrangement makes

2. B.R. Crick and Miriam Alman (eds.) A guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland. 1961

the description more easily usable and meaningful. Where official records of bodies have not been arranged in some distinctive order by the holding body the following has been adopted as the order to be followed: – (i) minutes; (ii) in-letters; (iii) out-letters and (iv) miscellanea.

The final checking by the Director eliminated any unnecessary variation in style or form, but as mentioned above it was impossible to avoid uneven emphasis between reports. A style sheet was used in preparing the reports to cut down as much work as possible for the final editing.

The types of records covered in the Guide differ widely from one another. There are the large deposits of material in great institutions such as the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the Bodleian Library the National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Record Office. Papers found in the National Library of Scotland included the Murray collection containing a mass of vivid and often peppery letters from T.L. Mitchell to his patron, General Murray, from his time as a surveyor and mapper in the Peninsula, through his traumatic experience with Wylde the publisher, to his work and quarrels in New South Wales. Also found there were such papers as those about the Scottish martyrs, diaries of voyages, papers relating to the Gippsland Lake fisheries at the end of the 19th Century and papers of Admiral Cochrane, C-in C of the East India station from 1865 to 1866.

There are various collections to be found in the counties away from the main centres of scholarship. These included the county and city record offices. The type of material found in such places ranges from papers at the Kent Archives Office relating to Sir Henry Dering, who was transferred to the Australian Expeditionary Forces in France in 1916 as Assistant Provost Marshal, to the extensive papers of the Stanley family deposited at the Chester Record Office, amongst which are a magnificent body of papers and journals of Owen Stanley, containing detailed accounts of his voyages. Lyrical descriptions of first sighting New Guinea through a lifting mist – his timely part in thwarting French territorial ambitions in New Zealand – the poignant descriptions of his death in Sydney Harbour closely following that of his brother Charles Edward Stanley (who had been Secretary to Sir William Denison) – these memorable documents make the researcher feel very close to such a man. Cathedral archives and libraries were also visited to search for deposits of material, particularly for emigration and poor law records.

The holdings of societies of many kinds, with interests in Australia and the Pacific, have been described. These include scientific societies, missionary societies, emigration and sufragette societies.

The papers of the Royal Society of Arts, for instance, are rich in material relating to commerce, manufacture and agriculture in the colonies. The papers of the constitutional sufragette body, the Fawcett Society, contain many references to Australian and New Zealand women, and also contain the records

of the various women's emigration societies consolidated into and finally known before its dissolution in 1963 as the Women's Migration and Oversea Appointments Society. Two letter books of the Female Middle Class Emigration Society in this collection contain copies of letters from women sent to Australia and New Zealand as governesses and clerks; and their accounts of life in the colonies, the working conditions and economic situation are a particularly valuable source for the years 1862-82 for the economic historian.

Business archives include the records of merchant bankers, trading firms, shipping companies and others. An example of the kind of co-operation we received was the offer by the archivist of Kleinwort Benson, the merchant bankers, to draw up a list of their significant holdings in our field.

There are also the papers held privately. These range from a single diary of a voyage to Tasmania, discovered by talking shop at a dinner party, a transcript of which was subsequently sent to me from the writer's grand-daughter now living in the south of France; to relatively extensive records such as those of the Selwyn family now in the possession of the Reverend H. Selwyn Fry. Such people were usually only too willing to assist and entertain the Guide workers. Only rarely did we encounter difficulty with individuals (and this was occasionally because, unhappily, some previous visiting librarian or archivist had "disorganised" the papers, and in one case had actually removed papers on loan without ever returning them).

Work in Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland was undertaken in the later part of the survey and revealed similar types of material.

The completed work runs to about 1212 typescript quarto pages, with a preliminary typescript index of 383 pages, and 20-30 pages of preliminaries. The descriptions cover all major institutions, including larger libraries, county record offices, university archives, some borough archives, cathedral libraries and archives, all likely societies and many private archives but relatively few business archives or regimental archives. Because we had to cover the major institutions (unlike Crick and Alman who were building on earlier guides published by the Library of Congress) we could not spend the time nor find the space to print descriptions of many business archives. Wainwright and Matthews include many regimental museums and headquarters. Again time did not permit the following up of as many of these as would have been desirable; it is also true that not nearly so many regiments served in Australasia and the Pacific.

The main text will have been delivered to the publishers by the time this article is published and the projected date of publication is late 1971.

As I said earlier, the Guide is aiming to provide a compact source of information about manuscript material in the United Kingdom. Its value is already apparent from the use made by scholars in London of the draft reports.

Moreover, some United Kingdom institutions began referring enquirers to the Guide office for information which they believed the Guide would better supply, quite early in its life.

The index will be invaluable in drawing together the miscellaneous mass of material scattered throughout the British Isles. For instance it will bring together the considerable deposits of material relating to the voyages of ships, the coal trade, or missionaries, to be found in the larger institutions and the many smaller repositories and private collections.

It will also, I hope, draw scholars' attention onward from the more popular fonds of source material to the lesser-known ones. For instance, scholars will be encouraged and enabled to proceed from the well-trodden paths of the Colonial Office records to the lesser known records of the Treasury (with its mass of policy papers on all aspects of colonial development, trade, defence, etc.); from the well-used collections of the British Museum where for example papers on the South Australian settlement can be and have been used, to the papers of Roland Hill on the same subject in the Post Office archives; from the larger collections generally to the collections of county record offices, cathedral libraries, and private individuals.

In short, I hope and expect that this Guide will become a major tool of Australian historical research and a tribute to the initiative of the two sponsoring institutions and, as already suggested by its popular name "The Mander Jones Guide", a lasting memorial to one of Australia's most distinguished librarians.