

# International Notes

**Edited by Don Brech**

**International Council on Archives**

During the past year Guam, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu have joined the International Council on Archives. With existing members Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands the total membership in the Western Pacific has more than doubled. This provides increasing, direct support for the Pacific Regional Branch (PARBICA) and, in turn, reflects the contribution PARBICA has made to archives in the Pacific since its formation.

**Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand**

*Correspondent: Diana Meads*

The National Library of New Zealand was well represented at New Zealand's first national oral history conference which was held at Victoria University, Wellington from 19 to 20 April 1986. Librarians, archivists, academics, students, broadcasters and genealogists were among the 180 participants. David Lance, former custodian of oral history material at the Imperial War Museum, and now of the National Museum of Australia was a special guest. A committee was elected to investigate the establishment of a national oral history association. The conference was initiated by the New Zealand Oral History Archive, a trust established in 1981 to record oral history, act as a resource and training centre, and promote standards for the collection and preservation of oral history material in New Zealand. The National Library has an agreement with the Archive to store their master tapes and make listening copies available through the Manuscripts Section of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Turnbull staff are continuing to prepare and pack their collections for the move to the National Library Building. Obvious effects of the Library's double move have been a sharp drop in the number of researchers using the Manuscripts Section in its temporary quarters, and a reduction in the number of collections being accessioned, the result of deliberate attempts to delay, where possible, receipt of material until the Section is re-established in the National Library Building in mid-1987.

**National Archives, Republic of Kiribati***Correspondent: Richard Overy*

The Pacific Information Centre at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji has made available a portable HiraKawa 35 microfilm camera on long term loan. This will enable the Archives to copy important records on all the outer islands. The records cannot be deposited in the National Archives as they are in constant use.

Small, petrol generators are used as the source of power as there are no mains supplies on the outer islands. It is expected that the project will take up to three years to complete.

**National Archives of Malaysia***Correspondent: Rusnah Johare*

On March 22, 1986 the P. Ramlee Memorial was officially opened by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports. The Memorial constitutes yet another addition to the various divisions of the National Archives under the concept of 'total archives'.

The Memorial commemorates the work of the artist, P. Ramlee, to the field of performing arts in Malaysia. The objective of the Memorial is to preserve his works and to encourage study and research into various aspects of his contribution to arts and culture as a whole. The Memorial is located at the house where he last stayed until his demise in 1973.

The idea to set up a memorial to P. Ramlee was first mooted by the National Archives soon after his death but it was only in 1983 that definite steps were taken to realise the proposal. The P. Ramlee Memorial Project was announced by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Sports on 27 February 1984. A special fund to collect donations for the project was launched at the same time. Work on the Memorial, undertaken by the Public Works Department, was started in November 1985 and was completed in January 1986. It was opened on 22 March 1986, the date P. Ramlee was born.

The popularity of this project is reflected in the number of people visiting the Memorial which totalled 100,000 in the first month of its inauguration.

**National Archives of New Zealand.***Correspondent: Mark Stevens*

For three months during 1986 a Canadian records management consultant led a project team to investigate and report on records management in the Public Service. The team included representatives of the National Archives and the State Services Commission, as well as a departmental records officer. The Acton Report recommended the establishment of a records management advisory group within the State

Services Commission and an increased role for the records centres operated by the National Archives — including the establishment of at least one additional records centre.

Fieldwork conducted by the team covered every department of the Public Service. It was discovered that government paper occupied 62,000 square metres of office accommodation and cost nearly \$7 million annually, just to store. The quantity of paper was more than 300,000 linear metres and the annual growth rate 7½%. These figures exclude National Archives holdings. Approximately 40% of paper retained in departments is classified by its creators as 'dead'.

As a result of the report the National Archives is preparing to face a deluge of appraisal projects and incoming archives as this mountain of paper is cleared over the next few years. Priorities will be the acquisition of access to computer-listing and sorting facilities and more appraisal staff. It also expects to have an input into the proposed records management advisory group.

During the past year, a number of staff have been hired on special contracts, rather than as regular full-time employees. These are either former members of staff with special skills or subject specialists whose expertise is required for particular projects. At the present time, most of the contract workers are engaged on special arrangement and description projects. The collection of official war art is also being arranged and described in this way.

The Northern Archives and Records Trust Board, which supplies archival advice to local government organisations in the Auckland area on a user-pays basis by hiring an archivist from the National Archives, has widened its sphere of involvement. The Board has hired a consultant to expand the service to local government and extend it to businesses. After only a few months several of New Zealand's largest corporations have been assisted and many others have approached the Board for advice.

Strict privacy provisions in the Act that governs the collection and dissemination of information from the quinquennial census of populations have meant, until now, that the original schedules were destroyed after statistical analysis and no copies retained.

However, an agreement between the Department of Statistics and National Archives to save at least every second census seems close. It is likely that the closed period will be 100 years and that only microfilm copies will be retained. Some matters remain to be sorted out, notably which agency will bear the major cost of filming and storing the original schedules.

## **National Archives of Papua New Guinea**

*Correspondent: Judith Hornabrook*

The close of 1985 saw a change of government and administrative changes including the return of the National Archives to its former Department, the Department of Education, after several months with the newly formed Department of Administrative Services.

Plans for a new building proceed and it is hoped that tenders will be called for shortly. The site is adjacent to the National Library and near the existing premises which will be retained as a store and to accommodate some specialist sections of the National Archives.

Jacob Hevelawa returned at the beginning of the year after attending the Diploma in Archives Administration at the University of New South Wales, the first Papua New Guinean to do so.

Staff absences, budget cuts and administrative changes have affected progress on the patrol reports but the work will continue.

## **National Archives, Singapore**

*Correspondent: Lisa Lim*

Upgrading of the Central Microfilming Unit's equipment has been completed. The Unit now has the capacity to produce microfiche as well as roll films and aperture cards.

An 'open-house' for civil servants was held from 14-18 July to explain how the National Archives operates. A slide show and guided tours were organised for the visitors.

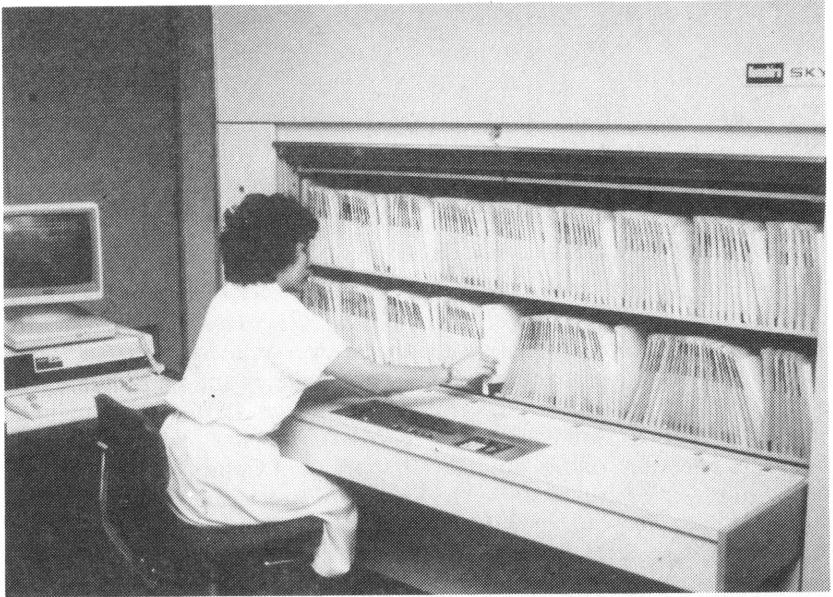
The National Archives continued to maintain an active exhibition programme. Four exhibitions were arranged during the first half of 1986. Two of these were 'Singapore before Raffles' — a pictorial record of Singapore's early history before her founding by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 — and 'History of Chinese Clan Associations in Singapore' which focused on the formation, development and roles played by the Chinese associations.

## **National Library and Archives, Tuvalu**

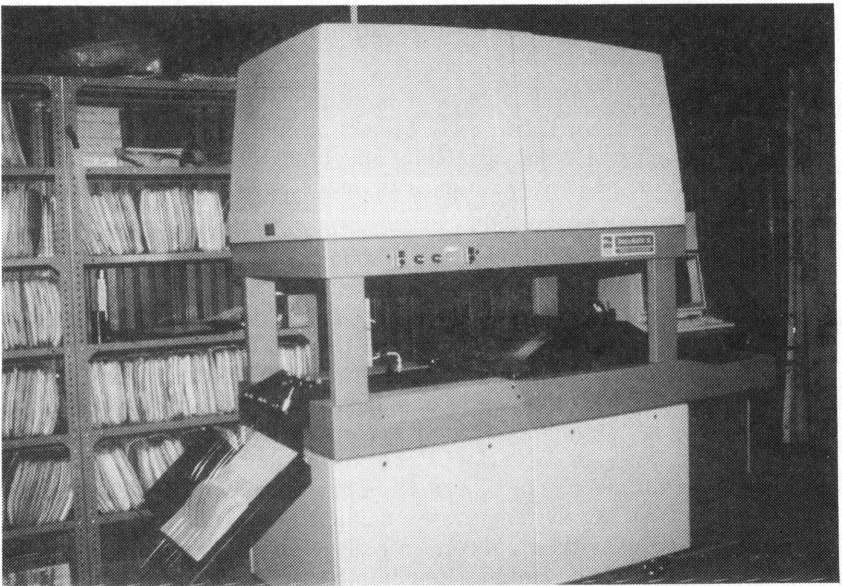
*Correspondent: Richard Overy*

The National Archives' record holdings, previously stored in an air-conditioned strongroom at the Office of the Prime Minister, have been removed to the National Library due to shortage of space and failed air-conditioning.

Both the Library and Archives are housed in a small, wooden-framed, fibro-cement building which was formerly used as medical dispensary. Conditions are extremely cramped. Such processing of records as can be managed now has to be undertaken in the Librarian/Archivist's Office.



National Archives, Singapore's automated registry. A rotary power file connected to a mainframe computer for faster file retrieval.



Central Microliming Unit's TDC DOCUMATE III camera with a computer link for titling microfilm.