

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Edited by Margaret J. Jennings

**PARBICA Fourth Biennial General Conference and Training Seminar.
10-23 April 1989. Wellington, New Zealand.**

Correspondent: Margaret J. Jennings

Twenty-eight delegates from the Pacific region met in Wellington during April representing American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

Michael Roper, Keeper of Public Records, London and Secretary-General of ICA, represented ICA. Ms Habibah Yahya, National Archives of Malaysia, was a distinguished guest from SARBICA. Ms Judith Hornibrook, former Treasurer of PARBICA and recently retired Chief Archivist of Papua New Guinea, joined the proceedings.

The conference was scheduled over two days. Each delegate presented a nation report in the opening sessions. The seminar programme (as determined at the Third Conference in Papua New Guinea) centred on the "Arrangement and Description of Archives and Finding Aids". Several visits to companies and institutions were arranged and there were formal and informal receptions and social functions for the delegates and hosts.

Conference: 13-14 April 1989

The President, George Paniani, opened the proceedings and then called for one minute silence in remembrance of Ahmed Ishmail of Zimbabwe—a warm and respected colleague, who had been with us at the Port Moresby conference. This was followed by Michael Roper who extended greetings on behalf of ICA.

The Treasurer (John Davies) highlighted grants received from international agencies directed towards specific projects, the relationship established with ADAB in Sydney and Canberra and presented the draft budget for 1989/90. The need for individual member governments to contribute towards PARBICA finances was also stressed.

The Editor (Nancy Lutton) had distributed a detailed report for discussion, centring on the future of the *Journal* and *Newsletter*, a series

of monographs, and general publicity re PARBICA and its activities. It was agreed to continue with the *Journal* and *Newsletter* emphasising the need for sustained individual contributions and to foster the exchange of information between the *Newsletter* editor and the International Notes editor of *Archives and Manuscripts*. The preparation of the PARBICA *Directory* is under review.

Various reports were then presented and discussed. Major issues centred on education and access to training and courses for Pacific archivists with various models being cited and including sources of funding; regional conservation; the concept of a central repository for vital records; the restitution of former colonial archives; the circulation of archival literature and publications; the use of the PARBICA library/archives located at the Fiji National Archives and the consideration of individual requests for assistance from member nations.

Mr Setareki Tuinaceva, retiring Chief Archivist of Fiji and a founding member of PARBICA, was proposed as an Honorary Member and this was carried with acclamation.

Elections were held for 1989-1991 office bearers:

Bureau

President	Kunei Etekiera (Kiribati)
Vice-President	Jones George (Federated States of Micronesia)
Secretary-General	John Wright (American Samoa)
Deputy Secretary-General	Siavata Gale (Western Samoa)
Treasurer	Peter Orlovich (Australia)

Board

Salote Aleamotu'a (Tonga); Alfred Capelle (Marshall Islands); Sopo Etimani (American Samoa); Gabriel Gerry (Papua New Guinea); Masood Khan (Fiji); Nancy Lutton—Editor (Australia).

The Fifth Biennial General Conference and Seminar will be held in 1991 sponsored jointly by American and Western Samoa. The theme will be "Oral History and Tradition".

(PS. It is with much regret we record Masood Khan's untimely death on 10 August 1989).

National Archives of the Cook Islands

Annual Report 1988 (edited)

Principal Archivist: Kauraka Kauraka

The Public Records Act of 1984 established the National Archives legally and separately. In this Act, the Archivist is responsible to the Minister of Arts and Culture. The Archives does not have a separate

budget like other divisions within government departments. Currently, the Archives staff is paid or belongs to the Prime Minister's Department—George Paniani as Archivist, myself as the Principal Archivist.

Except for the files in the office, the materials in the storage rooms are not organised and catalogued for use by the public. They are generally in piles according to departments at the time of their initial deposit. There is much work required by the Archivist to identify the files, catalogue what is usable, and repair and clean what needs to be cleaned. Some may require to be destroyed after careful assessment of their value. The unorganised materials are stored in three separate rooms. There is one vacant smaller room and one dark room. One necessary task is the fumigation of the records.

The archives still in the Library and Museum building have been catalogued and indexed. This was done several years ago. Mr Paniani has a comprehensive index of those records. He also has an index for the myths and legends collected by the Culture Division of various islands in the Cook Islands. The indexes are kept in the Archives Office in Takuvaine Valley.

One major plan is the microfilming of the catalogued archive records. Another major plan is the improvement and development of the administration. The offices and the whole set of buildings and grounds need maintenance and renovation.

The most urgent problem that needs attention is regarding the status of the Archives: to be a division within the Prime Minister's Department by legislation or a separate department under the Minister of Arts and Culture.

A final concern is regarding the value of the records. Mr Paniani has expressed his concern for the possible lack of understanding or interest some government employees have in old records. Government department heads can play a vital role in increasing the appreciation of old files and records. They can explain to those in the department about the historical value of any record. They can by example demonstrate their interest by making sure that old records are disposed of according to the Public Records Act 1984.

Despite the problems, I look forward to working with government employees and members of the public to improve the quality of the services offered by the Archives Office.

Bank of New Zealand Archives Museum

Correspondent: Robin Griffin

Recent accessions have included all the Board Minutes and Memoranda from the 1950s up to 1979. We already had them from 1861. Our

cupboards, specially installed for them in the strongroom, are now just about full.

We have been asked by the European archivists to form a British Commonwealth Bank Archivists' Committee of the International Council on Archives. So we are working on the idea. Any input from our Australian colleagues would be most welcome. The Banking Five (there are five banking archives here) may arrange to have quarterly meetings.

I have also finally got off to the printer the final proofs for yet another Branch centenary booklet, the 44th since 1973!

Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

Correspondent: Peter Miller

The move of 2,000m of archives and manuscripts referred to in the last issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* took place in April-May, and the new premises in Leith Street, Dunedin opened to the public on 6 June.

There have been a number of very favourable comments from readers concerning the successful conversion of a vehicle testing station to a repository for archives, manuscripts and photographs. Enhanced facilities for researchers have been provided, particularly in the area of reprographic services. However, as all archivists who have been involved in major moves will know, it will be some time before everything in the non-public areas is back to normal!

Stage two of the shift is scheduled to occur in February 1990. Until this time, visiting researchers should continue to enquire ahead to check on availability of holdings.

In 1988, some 188m of archives and manuscripts were received, with total holdings now being 3,600m. With Government departments continuing to be restructured, and the biggest upheaval in local government from the point of view of amalgamation since the abolition of the provinces in 1876, the Library continues to be faced with taking in substantial quantities of archives. Space considerations will loom large again before long!

Report from Tonga

Correspondent: Salote Aleamotu'a

Tonga still has no National Archives, nor any legislation to this effect. Archival materials are kept by individual divisions and government departments.

With the exception of the Palace Office records, Free Wesleyan Church and Roman Catholic archives, which have been organised in some ways,

Government departments' closed files are stored in their offices. The Roman Catholic Archives has been indexed in Tongan, English and French. The Tongan Traditions Committee has made an effort to organise their collection. The Free Wesleyan Church are in the process of transferring their records (1871-1900s) into microfiche.

Generally, these collections are in poor condition, and desperately need conservation, preservation and organisation.

Plans towards the establishment of a National Archives have progressed slowly. In 1978, a proposal from Ministry of Lands and Survey was submitted to Cabinet for microfilming their records. In 1982, Tonga Unesco National Commission sent in a proposal to Unesco for a two-storey building to replace the present Parliament House, whereby the top floor was to accommodate the Archives. In 1988, a proposal was submitted by the Ministry of Labour to Cabinet for recruitment of Museum/Archives Advisor/Officer for the Tonga National Centre.

Even though the importance of having an Archives is realised, due to lack of funds the implementation of such a project is not possible as there are other priorities.

For years, the Ministry of Education has been planning a Public Library/Museum/Archives/Visual Arts and again, lack of funds has prevented the implementation of such. To date, it is anticipated that the Government of Japan will fund this 3.5 million project. However, since other projects have priority, the Public Library/Museum/Archives/Visual Arts project is further delayed.

There is an urgent need to centralise, preserve and conserve archival materials. Unless government is convinced of the above need, records of Tonga's historical development will soon perish.

National Archives of Vanuatu

Correspondent: Willie Toa

The National Archives is attached to the long established Vanuatu Cultural Centre in the capital of Port Vila. The Cultural Centre has three components: the National Library, the National Museum and the National Archives. The National Library and National Museum are housed in one of the oldest buildings on the Port Vila waterfront. The National Archives is housed in a separate building situated above the capital, Port Vila.

The National Archives was established in 1981, a year after Independence in July 1980 (from the Condominium of the British and French governments). A grant of \$A30,000 was made available from the Australian Development Assistance Bureau to renovate the old lunatic asylum in Port Vila to serve as the archives building.

The Cultural Centre is controlled by a Board of Management and is under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Since the establishment of the National Archives, the archival collections have been expanded with more deposits from some government departments and various church archives. There are also papers from the Western Pacific High Commission (when its offices closed down during 1978 in Suva, Fiji) and some New Hebrides British Service Records were returned to Vanuatu at that time, too. Some were also sent to Britain for safe keeping there.

There were also papers from the British Residency in Vila, papers from various British Development Agencies in the outer islands handed over at Independence and papers from the French Residency obtained after Independence. However, with only 80 metres of shelf space, the archives building is already overcrowded.

The present archives building is very strong, surrounded with high concrete walls and includes office space, a sorting area and five repositories, each having an air conditioner which operates 12 hours a day from Monday to Friday. An extension to the present building has been approved by the N.P.S.O. and we are now seeking funds from the Australian government.

At the moment we have four permanent staff members. Draft legislation on the Archives is held up in the M.H.A. awaiting approval. This year and last year's budget were \$7,000,000, which paid the salaries and services of the Cultural Centre.

Future planning revolves around more visits to government departments, more training for staff, both locally and overseas, more staff and conservation needs.

Major problems are lack of sufficient funds and lack of space.

Brunei National Archives

Correspondent: Ak Omarali Pg Anak Hashim

An Exhibition on Education in Brunei was organised by the Archives Section, Brunei Museum from 31 December 1988 to 31 January 1989. It was officially opened by Dato Paduka Haji Ahmad bin Haji Jumaat, Deputy Minister of Education, Brunei Darussalam.

The exhibition depicted the early development of education in Brunei Darussalam to the present day. It contained information extracted from the local newspapers, Brunei State Annual Reports, Education Department Reports, school magazines, school reports and photographs. A video show included interviews about the educational system during the Residency period. The exhibition was also held in the three districts of Brunei Darussalam.

Records Management & Archives Office of the Philippines

Correspondent: Edgardo J. Celis

We take pride in announcing that we have newly established our second field office in Davao City, officially called Regional Archives Division.

Located at the southern part of the country, it will serve four regions which have approximately 900 national and local government offices, hospitals and state universities and colleges.

The Davao City field office has a personnel complement of eleven, headed by a Records Officer V.

National Archives, Singapore

Correspondent: Lim Gee Kheng

The Traditional Performing Act Photo Competition & Heritage Hunt Competition was held between 17 February and 2 March 1989, attracting a total of 1,452 visitors.

Other ongoing activities of the National Archives include appraisal of public records, provision of micrographic consultancy services and the conservation of archival materials.

International Council on Archives. Symposium on Current Records: Converging Disciplines in the Management of Recorded Information. Ottawa, Canada. May 1989.

Reviewer: Glenda I. Acland

The Symposium on Current Records promised a unique international opportunity to address the effect of the convergence of disciplines and technologies on the management of recorded information. It was designed to provide a forum for the range of information professionals including information technologists, records managers, archivists, data managers and librarians to debate and better understand the direction that information management is taking. In my view it failed to deliver this promise.

The concept of the symposium was both inspiring and exciting: with a couple of notable exceptions the papers presented were not. The programme covered a wide range of topics with individual sessions on *Document Management*, *Management of Graphic Records*, *Management of Machine-Readable Data*, *Convergence in the Management of Document, Graphic and Electronic Records*, *Evolution of Disciplines in Information Management* and concluding with *Information Management in an Integrated Environment*. Most speakers took a retrospective or "state of the union" approach. Achievements and progress to date are fine but this symposium on the whole missed its purpose of sharing forward ideas and influencing

future directions. Debate there certainly was not. Too often we were left with an enunciation of well known problems without strategies to deal with them.

Perhaps the target "mix" of professionals encouraged some speakers to generalisations? Perhaps different national developments result in "news" to one country being regarded as "old hat" in another? Perhaps convergence will not be a meeting of the minds but rather a take-over by the dominant professional group in a given organisation? I was left wondering where the international archival community stood in all this: Stunned on the sidelines as technology passes it by? Or deeply immersed in 19th century *fonds* while thinking that current records should really be given some attention some day?

One speaker, at least, attempted to bring some debate into the proceedings—David Bearman, Consultant, Archives and Museums Informatics, U.S.A., in an extremely relevant paper entitled *Multi-Sensory Data and Its Management*. In a style for which his nation is known, Bearman coined numerous succinct and highly descriptive phrases to explain his perspective on convergence against a background of traditional archival principles. He expressed the view that archivists, unlike perhaps other related information professionals, have a deep anthropological understanding of what information is. As "information packets" are now changing and losing their authorship and their attributability which were the mainstays of access and control, then this understanding should be directed at "intellectual" rather than "physical" control. He stressed the documentation was about accountability and organisation in systems not information (as librarians view it) or content.

Bearman's comment that it is no longer the *document* that is the fundamental unit but the *data base*, followed on from a theme in previous speaker Ronald Weissman's (Assistant Vice-President for Academic Computing and Associate Professor of History, Brown University, U.S.A.) most interesting paper *The Electronic Desktop and IRM: The Brave New World of Compound Documents*—that an electronic document is less of a *thing* than a *process*. Bearman concluded that with electronic documentation the concept of *permanent value* needed to be replaced with a concept of *continuing value* and the current *cost management rationale* replaced by *risk management effectiveness*. That Bearman failed to attract debate or even comment at the end of the paper perhaps reflected as much on his personal notoriety as it did on the conduct of the "discussion" sessions. This was the sort of stuff around which I had imagined this symposium would revolve. I was left speculating how differently an A.S.A. Conference would have dealt with these points.

This symposium was plagued by a number of technical problems. The venue, the Auditorium at the National Archives of Canada, while conveniently located is in definite need of renovation if it is to be used

for occasions such as this. A product of 1960's architecture, the acoustics are poor and the sound system primitive. One out of two audience microphones repeatedly failed to work causing havoc with the simultaneous French/English translation. Uncarpeted floors resulted in unacceptably high noise intrusion particularly at starting sessions resulting in introductory remarks or the context of some papers being lost to parts of the audience. The quality of slide and OHT projection was frequently poor with some distress to presenters and audience alike. The air-conditioning system could not cope with the 300 participants or Ottawa's unexpected heat wave. An obsession with timing several times aborted discussion when it was just starting to warm up, although one chair tried valiantly to continue. Time after time we were exhorted to mix and mingle at the lengthy breaks but the basic tool for such activity—a list of participants with institutional affiliation and position—was not provided, despite numerous requests for same. We were advised that it would be sent to all delegates as a memento of the occasion. When it is eventually received I will know who I could have met had I known they were there!

Some twenty-five countries were represented in Ottawa. I was the only Australian and there was one New Zealander (Ken Scadden). The symposium was followed by a one-day Round Table on the Management of Recorded Information in Developing Countries. One U.S.A. delegate, upon learning that I was from Australia asked if I was there to attend the Developing Countries workshop! (Our banana-republic status appears to have spread.) A subsequent programme of tours and visits over two days made the journey worthwhile and provided a much-needed mechanism for those with similar interests to get together. It was disappointing that no general tours of the National Archives of Canada were available, particularly for those of us from "the other end of the world" who may not have the opportunity to visit Canada again. A tour of the National Archives' Optical Disk Capture System appears to have been fully booked before I arrived in Ottawa but the tour of the MIDAC/EDP Records Preservation Section was most enlightening although they were still moving into new accommodation. Two automated records/information management installations were visited providing an opportunity to see convergence at the coalface. At *Environment Canada* a highly classified, subject based system with obvious library origins is in operation, while at the *Department of External Affairs*, a distributed records-management based system is operated by specially trained Bureau Information Control Officers (BICOs) in decentralized support units.

But for those of us hoping to glean some new ideas and arguments to support development towards institutional information management, the best was yet to come. A presentation by the *Treasury Board of Canada* was packed with vital relevant details as officials launched the Canadian Government's Information Management Policy, "the overall management of an organizations' information and supporting technological

investments". The order of precedence within this policy and the balance it strikes appeals to my "deep anthropological understanding" of the place of information in an organization. It recognizes the dual assets of information and technology but relegates technology to its correct supportive role. Information is delivered within a strategic planning framework recognizing that the primary thrust of efficient information management necessitates "the co-ordination of the development and administration of the policies, practices and plans for the definition, organization, location, effective use, protection, retention and disposal or archival preservation of information holdings within" an organization. *This is intellectual control.* Some of us in the country have been chipping away within our institutions to achieve this for some time. With the Canadian Government's example we may now be able to advance this cause.

Universities set up archives on Beijing Revolt

Source: *The Age* 31.10.89

Scholars and universities around the world are setting up archives to collect pamphlets, posters and other items created during the democracy movement in China last spring.

Scholars involved in the effort say their aim is to collect materials of great historical significance and prevent the Chinese Government from denying the uprising ever happened.

Australian National University, the University of Leiden in Holland and the University of Toronto are among those to join the effort.

At least seven American universities, including Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Chicago, are putting out calls for the material . . .

In addition to pamphlets and posters, the archives will contain photographs, videotapes, bloody clothing and eyewitness oral histories.

Archives II: A new building for the National Archives

Source: *SAA Newsletter* September 1988 (edited).

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is planning to construct a new archival facility, Archives II, in College Park, Maryland.

Construction of Archives II is scheduled to begin in 1990 and to be completed in late fall of 1993. NARA will begin to occupy the building in 1994.

Archives II will not replace the current National Archives Building in downtown Washington, D.C. Both buildings will operate as archival facilities, but will emphasise different programs. NARA will continue to use the downtown facility as a records storage and public-use facility.

The proposed site is approximately 33 acres on the northwest end of the University of Maryland campus in College Park. In NARA's search for a suitable site, easy access for researchers was a top priority.

With the construction of Archives II, the National Archives will be able to vacate 10 leased facilities in the Washington, D.C. area and to consolidate its operations in the National Archives Building and Archives II. Most importantly, Archives II will enable NARA to do a better job of preserving the nation's records and serving the citizens who use those records.

Cash for decaying archives

Source: *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. 10.3.89.

The Government is to give £300,000 towards establishing a fund to conserve Britain's crumbling historic manuscripts.

The money, to be spread over three years, is to go to record offices, libraries, and other holdings of manuscripts and documents which are particularly important and in a bad state of repair.

It follows a report by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts revealing that up to a third of holdings in these libraries could not be consulted by scholars because they had not been properly listed, while 40,000 shelves of them were in too fragile a state to be handled.

The fund will be administered by trustees, yet to be announced, and the British Library. The library, and the Royal Commission, are seeking matching amounts of money to go into the conservation fund, although such private money has yet been guaranteed.

Contributions to *International Notes*

We are interested in news from anywhere in the world, but especially from the Pacific and Asian regions. Items of interest include:

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| * legislative and public issues | * significant acquisitions |
| * major staff/accommodation changes | * research projects |
| * major exhibitions | * archival system developments |

If preferred, simply forward a copy of relevant reports or press releases.

Contributions for the next issue (May 1990) should be received by 28 February 1990.