

# THE WORK OF THE AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT IN 1989-90

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*It is now 45 years since the Australian Joint Copying Project was set up by the National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales. It is 30 years since Phyllis Mander-Jones, as the first full-time ACJP Officer, began to extend the coverage of the Project far beyond the Public Record Office. Filming of Australian records in Britain has continued without a break since 1948 and by 1990 a total of 9267 reels had been produced and distributed to libraries and archives in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region.*

It was always assumed that the AJCP would be finite, although it has survived far longer than was originally envisaged. In 1988, following the withdrawal of the State Library of New South Wales, the National Library sought and obtained funds from other institutions to enable the AJCP office in Australia House in London to remain in operation until 1993.<sup>1</sup> The Project is therefore in its final phase and the staff in both London and Canberra are working under increasing pressure. This brief report will discuss some of the public and private archives that were located, listed or filmed by the AJCP Officer and her assistant during 1989-90.<sup>2</sup> It will also refer to some recent developments in the long-standing task of publicising and describing the microfilm produced by the AJCP.

## **London: the Public Record Office Series**

Selections from two important classes relating to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force were filmed during the year. Adm.1, the records of the Admiralty Secretariat, was first tackled by the AJCP in

the early 1960s and a great many records, extending back to Cook, Phillip and Bligh, have been filmed. The most recent instalment are records of the 1901-13 period. They deal inter alia with the 1903 Naval Agreement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand, problems arising from the joint administration of the New Hebrides, the visit of the United States Fleet in 1908, and the events leading up to the transfer of the Australian Station to the newly formed Royal Australian Navy in 1913.

Another class of interest to defence historians is Air 1, comprising the oldest records of the Air Ministry. The records filmed mostly consist of squadron record books, combat reports and reconnaissance reports of Australian Flying Corps squadrons serving in France and the Middle East during World War I. They are a useful supplement to the squadron war diaries held in the Australian War Memorial. Air 1 also contains several essays written by Australian officers at the RAF Staff College at Andover describing their wartime experiences.

It is often assumed that the AJCP must have copied all the classes at the Public Record office relating to the British penetration of the Pacific and the colonisation of Australia. This is far from being the case. Among the eight PRO classes searched in 1989-90 was a neglected Home Office class, H.O.42, general correspondence of George III, 1782-1820. Although the list is not yet complete, it appears that the correspondence includes important material on convict transportation and the early years of the settlement at New South Wales. Searching another class, F.O.5, the pre-1906 correspondence of the Foreign Office relating to the United States, resulted in a 419 page list, the largest ever produced by AJCP staff. Apart from consular matters, the papers selected for filming deal with shipping, postal and cable services in the Pacific, Americans transported from Canada to Australia in 1839, the visit of the Confederate ship *Shenandoah* to Melbourne in 1865, Fenians in Australia and the *Catalpa* incident of 1876, land claims in Fiji, the Samoan disturbances of 1899, and the United States' relations with and ultimate annexation of Hawaii.

### London: the Miscellaneous Series

In 1988, when the future of the AJCP was under review, it was recognised that more time was needed to complete work at a few major repositories, in particular Rhodes House Library, British Museum (Natural History), Fawcett Library, Post Office Archives and the Hydrographic Department. Furthermore, there was concern that a small number of important institutions had been completely neglected: National Maritime Museum, Cambridge University Library, John Rylands Library, Manchester. Finally, the geographical coverage was somewhat uneven, and it was recognised that more time should be

given to repositories in northern England (especially Yorkshire), Scotland and Wales.

By 1990 some of these objectives had been achieved. Filming had been completed at the Fawcett Library, Post Office Archives, Pitt Rivers Museum and Rhodes House Library, Oxford. Of the Rhodes House collections, the most significant were the records of the Aborigines Protection Society. There are, unfortunately, very few early records extant of this influential pressure group, founded in 1837. For the period 1870-90, however, there is an extensive correspondence with British and colonial officials, missionaries and settlers concerning the ill-treatment of Aborigines, especially in Queensland and Western Australia, Maori land claims and the visits of Maori leaders to London, and the Pacific labour trade. The records are one of the finest sources on race relations filmed by the AJCP.

Naval records have always been given high priority by the AJCP. At the Hydrographic Department at Taunton filming is still in progress, but gradually some very important papers on naval exploration and surveying are being copied. They mainly date from 1800-50 and include extensive records of such naval officers as J. C. Wickham, J. Lort Stokes, Sir Francis Blackwood and Owen Stanley. Another repository first visited by AJCP staff in 1990 was the Ministry of Defence Library in London. It holds logs and journals of Phillip Parker King and other navigators and also Pacific vocabularies compiled in the 1850s by the naturalist John MacGillivray.

Whereas a good deal of attention has been devoted to Oxford archives, relatively little searching or filming has been undertaken at Cambridge. During the year Margaret Pamplin, who had at one time worked on the Mander-Jones project, was engaged to survey the huge collections at Cambridge University Library. They include political sources, such as the papers of Sir James Stephen of the Colonial Office and the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and some outstanding scientific records: the papers of William Gooch, Charles Darwin, J. J. Thomson and Lord Rutherford. The largest relevant collection are the papers of the Cambridge anthropologist Alfred Haddon, who led three expeditions to the Torres Strait Islands and New Guinea between 1888 and 1914.

In addition to her trips to Cambridge, Oxford and Taunton, the AJCP Officer visited record offices and libraries in Hull, York and Sheffield. Some more work still needs to be done in Yorkshire, but the coverage of English county and city archives is now very good. In 1991 the AJCP Officer plans to go further afield and survey the holdings of repositories in Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland.

## Canberra: Publications and Publicity

The work of the two staff in London in searching and filming has been complemented by the work of staff in the National Library in distributing copies of the film and in bringing it under intellectual control. During 1989-90 editorial work on parts 9 and 10 of the *AJCP Handbook* was virtually completed. Part 9, which describes nine personal collections in the Public Record Office, should be published early in 1991. Part 10, describing the Dominions Office classes, is the largest of all parts of the *Handbook*. It will be published later in the year.

The other notable development in Canberra is the creation of entries for AJCP microfilm for inclusion on the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). Using the MARC-AMC format developed by the Society of American Archivists, the PRO Series is being described at the class level and in due course the M Series will be described at the collection level. Library of Congress subject headings are provided for each entry. With the larger classes and collections the subject headings must necessarily be quite general, but the new Supersearch capability of ABN makes it possible to search the notes and contents fields, and these fields are being compiled with this factor in mind. The *AJCP Handbook* will remain an essential finding-aid for users of the microfilm. The ABN entries have a different purpose, being more concerned with publicising the existence of the film rather than listing or describing it in detail. Researchers who would otherwise have never heard of the AJCP may discover that a trip to Britain is not necessary and that copies of valuable source material can be consulted in various Australian libraries.

The AJCP is running out of time and useful Australian records will still await filming when the London office is closed in 1993. Nevertheless, this summary of the activities of the Project in 1989-90 indicates that a good deal of labour, energy and money is still being devoted to the Project and that some outstanding material is still being located, listed and filmed. The decision made in 1988 to continue the Project for a further five years would seem to have been vindicated.

## REFERENCES

1. Since 1988 the funding of the AJCP has been shared, in varying proportions, by the National Library of Australia, the National Library of New Zealand, the National Archives of New Zealand, the State Libraries of Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and the libraries of the Australian National University, Flinders University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of New England, University of New South Wales, University of Newcastle, University of Sydney and University of Tasmania.

2. Copies of the annual report of the AJCP Officer can be obtained from the Manuscript Section of the National Library. For earlier reports on the progress of the AJCP see Graeme Powell. "The Operation of the Australian Joint Copying Project", *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol. 4 (May 1972), pp. 4-16; John Thompson. "The Australian Joint Copying Project: thirty years on", *Australian Library Journal*, Vol. 28 (Oct. 1979), pp. 334-37; Graeme Powell. "The 35th year of the Australian Joint Copying Project", *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol. 12 (Nov. 1984), pp. 147-51.