

# International Notes

Edited by Pat Jackson

## **Robert Adrian Langdon (1924–2003)**

*Correspondent: Ewan Maidment, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau*

Bob Langdon died suddenly following a heart attack on 26 September 2003, aged 79. He had an unusual combination of talents which he applied with boundless energy and enthusiasm as a traveller, adventurer, journalist, writer, archivist and scholar. He was a romantic spirit enthralled by literature, languages, strange lands and exotic people. Tall, with a straight back, sporting a trim moustache, neatly attired, Bob had the air of an amiable conquistador. One of his most significant quests was to find and preserve Pacific Islands archives and manuscripts.

Bob was brought up in Adelaide. He had Scottish/Cornish ancestry from his mother and his father was of German/Danish extraction. (His grandfather, Julius Meincke, changed his name by deed poll to Langdon in 1917 in response to anti-German sentiment in South Australia during World War I.)

His first job in 1941 was in the South Australian Births, Marriages and Deaths Department, a Dickensian institution, dubbed by the staff as 'Hatch, Match and Dispatch', where the clerks used pen and ink to write out birth certificates. Bob recalled sitting on high wooden stools to consult musty leather-bound ledgers stored in a dungeon, the oldest dating back to 1842. The fluid wartime situation hastened Bob's promotion from office junior to registrar.

Bob enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy at 18. He had no intention of returning to the registry but the recordkeeping was useful in his later

archival pursuits. Already determined to become a writer, Bob read English classics and continued his voracious reading during his naval postings by frequenting the School of Arts Library in Cairns and the NSW Public Library in Sydney. He developed an interest in languages, learning to speak Spanish fluently, and became familiar with a number of romance languages.

When Bob was discharged from the Navy in 1946 he determined to travel to South America but could not find a berth. Focusing on writing instead, he moved between Sydney where he worked in the Public Library and Canberra where he was the sole reader at the National Library, and published his first article, on a 19<sup>th</sup> century escapade in Bolivian politics. He then retreated to Bungendore to write and to work on a translation of a Spanish novel. However, he was driven out by the cold and gave up freelance journalism.

Back in Sydney he was shanghaied as a non-union fireman on the *Nymphe*, a black-listed Panamanian-registered freighter, bound for Liverpool. The ship took three months to reach Penang, via Lautoka, Labasa, Suva, Port Moresby and Singapore, where the crew struck and were paid-off. Sailing on to London as a paying passenger Bob eventually landed a job; this was as secretary to a tin-mine manager in Bolivia, where he spent three years, between 1948 and 1951. He travelled extensively in South America and Spain during 1951–52. His account of these adventures, in the manner of Peter Pinney's *Dust on my Shoes*, was published in his autobiography, *Every Goose a Swan* (1995).

Working his way back in 1952 from Vancouver to Auckland as a watchman on the Union Steamship Company's *Wairuna*, Bob experienced Tahiti's magic spell. Back in Australia he worked as a reporter on the *Adelaide Advertiser*, including several sessions during 1954–55 in the Federal Parliamentary press gallery, and researched his history of Tahiti, *Island of Love*, first published in London in 1959, which had five editions. As a journalist with the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (PIM), 1962–67, he travelled extensively in the Islands on assignments producing investigative articles, many on obscure aspects of Pacific history using primary and secondary sources. Articles by Langdon and Stuart Inder, published in PIM and *New Guinea*, drew attention to the appalling history of the phosphate leases on Banaba (Ocean Island); these exposed sub-standard living conditions of Banabans exiled to

Rabi Island after Banaba had been mined out. It was in the *PIM*, too, that Bob first published his account of the marooned Spanish sailors on Amanu in the Tuamotu Islands. This discovery became the basis of his studies of European castaways in the Pacific Islands, prior to Captain Cook, which appeared in his two books, *The Lost Caravel* (1975), and *The Lost Caravel Revisited* (1988).

Bob's reputation as a Pacific specialist was well established when in 1968 he was appointed the foundation executive officer of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University (ANU). The Research School was a unique undertaking, inaugurated after World War II to pioneer Pacific Islands research. Bob was recruited by Harry Maude who had been transferred to the Department of Pacific History from the South Pacific Commission where, as director of the social development section, he had carried out a preservation microfilming program in the late 1950s.

The Department of Pacific History had already taken several archival initiatives. It had helped support Phyllis Mander-Jones' survey of manuscripts in the United Kingdom relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Professor Jim Davidson, the Department's head, had funded Dorothy Crozier's initial survey of colonial administration archives in Suva and expedited her appointment as the first archivist of Fiji and the Western Pacific.

Maude regarded Bob Langdon as the only person in Australia who possessed wide knowledge of Pacific history and its documentary sources, as well as extensive contacts in the Islands and enough business sense to carry out the job. The Bureau is a joint copying project, modelled on the Australian Joint Copying Project, initially supported by the University of Hawaii Library, the Turnbull Library in Wellington, the National Library of Australia, the Mitchell Library, the State Library of Victoria, and the ANU. It tracks down and copies documentary sources in or relating to the Islands for the PMB member libraries.

Although the general guideline for the Bureau's activities was in Maude's, 'The Documentary Basis for Pacific Studies', it was up to Bob to implement a program. He did so initially by drawing on materials he had accessed for his *PIM* articles. He also produced a newsletter, *Pambu*, which carried reports of his documentary discoveries, designed not only to inform sponsoring libraries but also to be reprinted by *PIM*

and other publications in the hope of bringing in more manuscripts for copying. Bob purchased a portable microfilm camera and began a series of Island fieldtrips which continued throughout his time at the Bureau.

His first microfilming expedition, in April–May 1969, was to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) where he had established contacts during his visits for PIM in 1963 and 1966. On Tangoa Island, South Santo, he filmed records of the Presbyterian Training Institute before it closed after 75 years of operation. He then flew in heavy weather to Aoba Island to visit Archdeacon Derek Rawcliffe of the Melanesian Mission at Lolowai. Bob's account of the trip shows some of the hazards of this kind of archival work. The pilot of the New Hebrides Airways Aztec aircraft was Gary Ogg, an Australian of 22 or 23 years, renowned for flying in all weathers:

The rain was now coming down so heavily that I could hardly see out of the windows. Even so, we took off without difficulty and were soon flying over an ink-blue, white flecked sea. For 10 minutes, the going was quite bumpy. Then the sky cleared a little and the turbulence decreased until we sighted Devil's Point, the westernmost tip of Aoba, and the sky again became an ominous black. Aoba, a huge, extinct volcano, was covered in dense vegetation from its summit to its iron-bound coast line. We flew along its southern side and then northeastwards as it changed direction. After spotting a hole in the 'ceiling', Ogg came down over the narrow grass strip of Longana, and as he turned to land, he said to everyone: 'Are you ready?' And down we came, seemingly flying crabwise.

A jeep was standing at the edge of the jungle beside the strip, and as we taxied towards it, I could see the Venerable Archdeacon Rawcliffe, a florid man in his late forties with a prominent, hawklike nose. He was standing in the rain in a beret, a raincoat and bare feet – not everyone's image of the head of an Anglican diocese...

We drove on through a thick tangle of jungle, dodging coconuts and fallen trees, climbing and descending almost perpendicular slopes, and occasionally dragging down vines and leaves from low overhanging branches... Finally

we reached the archdeacon's house, a small four-room building overlooking a cove of evident volcanic origin. The rain was still dripping down. It continued so, or got much worse, during the whole of my stay at Lolowai.

They changed into dry clothes and the Archdeacon got out his archives. They were letters and papers about land matters dating back to the turn of the century, registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths, a brief history of Aoba by a former missionary and a great deal of linguistic material written by the archdeacon himself and his predecessors. Working into the night, Bob filmed these documents until the generator went off and resumed work in the morning until the camera jammed. He took the camera head for repair on a hair-raising trip along the rim of a volcanic crater to a neighbour's house.

Conditions were so oppressive when I resumed microfilming [at the archdeacon's house] that I was soon awash again in my own perspiration. Then the rain began to fall in positive torrents accompanied by fearful flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder which caused the lights to flicker erratically. The moths and mosquitoes suddenly became so numerous that canny timing was needed to avoid photographing an insect each time the lens shutter was released. Finally the wind-on mechanism jammed again and I decided that I had done enough microfilming at Lolowai and packed up (from the unpublished section of *Every Goose a Swan*, Chapter 60).

The next morning the storm had abated a little when Bob was rowed out to the mission ship, *Fauabu Twomey*, for the voyage back to Santo, but the sea was still rough enough for a big wave to dowse the camera case. The ship crossed the rough strait to Santo where Bob arrived in time to meet up with friends and survey the remains of an ancient stone wall, which he demonstrated to have been built by Spaniards, before moving on to the next stage of the microfilming program.

Bob Langdon made many similar expeditions for the Bureau. During his 17 years as PMB executive officer, the Bureau produced about 2,100 rolls of 35mm microfilm of Pacific Islands manuscripts, archives and rare printed material, together with associated documentation, including published and unpublished indexes. Following Bob's

retirement in 1984, the Bureau continued to build on the firm foundations he had established, eventually shifting attention to more contemporary Pacific Islands archives. While Bob continued to take a kindly, encouraging interest in the affairs of the Bureau, he gave his main attention to his personal research.

As a visiting fellow in Pacific History at the ANU, a position which he retained until his death, he advocated his unorthodox views on the migration of the Pacific Islanders, supported by linguistic, botanical and biological evidence. However, it is his contribution to the preservation of Pacific Islands archives which will be remembered by archivists. Langdon was the Indiana Jones of archivists.

### **Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) 10 Conference: 'Remembering, Recording, Reclaiming', Wellington, New Zealand, 21–26 July 2003**

*Correspondents: Kathryn Dan, National Archives of Australia and Ken Scadden, Archives New Zealand*

*A valuable forum to gather professional knowledge, visit professional sites and meeting colleagues and experts.  
(PARBICA 10 delegate).*

#### **Background: What is PARBICA?**

Formed in 1981, the Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives (PARBICA) is a volunteer organisation representing government agencies, non-government organisations and individuals working in the field of archives or records management in the Pacific region. It is one of ten regional branches of the International Council on Archives (ICA), and covers the most diverse and largest geographic area. Twenty-five nations, states and territories are represented in PARBICA, with forty-four institutional and thirteen individual members.

ICA's mission is the advancement of archives through international cooperation. Archives, by providing evidence of human activities and transactions, underlie the rights of individuals and states, and are fundamental to democracy and good governance. ICA works for the protection and enhancement of the memory of the world.

PARBICA's objectives are:

- to establish, maintain and strengthen relations between archivists in the region and between institutions and professional organisations concerned with the custody and administration of archives;
- to promote the preservation and protection of the archival heritage of the region;
- to facilitate the use of archives through public education and improved access;
- to stimulate and organise archival activities;
- to provide and assist with formal and informal professional training; and
- to cooperate with other agencies concerned with the documentation of human and natural history in order to benefit all people.

### **The PARBICA conference and workshops**

The PARBICA conference is a major activity carried out to achieve PARBICA's objectives. These meetings have been held every few years since the inaugural PARBICA meeting in 1981. Training opportunities are few for the archivists and records managers of the Pacific islands, who generally work in isolation in small, resource-poor institutions, and PARBICA's conference is held in conjunction with training workshops. Knowledge gained at the conferences and workshops is taken back to the islands of the region by participating archivists to inform their work and to provide in-country training for other archives and records staff.

In summary, the PARBICA conference and workshops are an opportunity for:

- strategic planning for PARBICA's work to improve recordkeeping and archives preservation in the Pacific;
- training and professional development in pressing areas;
- presentation of results and discussion of next stages for PARBICA projects;

- collation and presentation of institutional and country reports; and
- collection and publication of Pacific archival statistics.

### Participants

There were 59 participants and speakers at PARBICA 10. One representative each attended from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, American Samoa, New Caledonia, Canada, Palau, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei), Vanuatu, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Niue, Tonga, Guam, French Polynesia, Hawai'i, and the United Kingdom. Countries with more than one person attending were New Zealand (23), Australia (11), Fiji (2), Papua New Guinea (2) and the International Council on Archives headquarters (2).

Unfortunately delegates from the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Nauru were unable to attend for a range of reasons, including social unrest and transport difficulties.

Most delegates from the Pacific were heads of government archival institutions. 46% of attendees were women.

*PARBICA 10 had a well-chosen group of speakers with varied experiences in the field. I enjoyed the visits to the various archives establishments. (PARBICA 10 delegate).*

### The program

The conference program consisted of a series of workshops on topics of importance to archivists in the Pacific region, followed by delegates' biennial business meeting (known as the general conference). Workshops were designed to address areas identified as most pressing in evaluations of PARBICA's previous conference, in Palau in 2001.

Delegates were encouraged to take an active role throughout the week, through panel discussions, group work, formation of recommendations and practical workshops. PARBICA has progressively adopted a meeting format which merges 'general conference' and 'training' components, rather than separating formal reports on institutional development from workshop sessions. We believe that the archivists of our region gain the most benefit by sharing experiences and knowledge with one another.



***Latest developments and current issues***

The conference opened with a session on latest developments and current issues around the region, in which all participants introduced one major achievement and challenge their institution has faced since the 2001 meeting. Delegates from Guam, Australia, New Caledonia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas then spoke in more detail about progress in their respective countries.

Written reports on member countries, states and territories were collated and distributed at the meeting.

***Project management***

Ewan Maidment of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau led a discussion of key project management issues, particularly where funding agencies are sponsoring a project. Projects are underway or planned in most Pacific island nations and participants contributed their experiences about projects in Palau, Niue, Cook Islands, American Samoa and New Caledonia.

A case study of a particular project, the 'Evidence Based Governance in the Electronic Age', which was sponsored by the World Bank and facilitated by the International Records Management Trust, was examined. Video footage of the Conference was shown to the delegates, and participants from the 5 Commonwealth countries (New Zealand was accredited observer status for the Conference) involved namely the Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea were able to comment on their experiences of the Conference.

***Digitisation and computerisation***

Archival automation, digitisation and Internet connectivity are key issues in the Pacific region. Most archivists feel pressure to move forward in this area, but lack the infrastructure to do so. Participants heard a report on the UNESCO/National Library of New Zealand 'Pacific Pathways' project that aims to develop digital libraries and archives in the Pacific.

Karina Taylor, who had undertaken a research study of infrastructure and readiness for digitisation in Fiji, and Seta Tale, National Archivist of Fiji, provided a commentary on the practical problems for implementation of digitisation in Pacific archives.

This session also included demonstrations of the Wellington Public Library's Samoan Online Public Access Catalogue and the Alexander Turnbull Library's TAPUHI computerised control and access system. These demonstrations gave participants a view of how initial computerisation of control systems could contribute to making the archives accessible.

A talk about the work and a tour of the commercial firm New Zealand Micrographic Services in Tawa (north of Wellington) complemented discussions of digitisation and preservation microfilming.

### ***Education and training***

Speakers in this session were Laura Millar, a training and education consultant from Canada who has been working for PARBICA on a feasibility study on establishment of a certificate-level distance education course in the Pacific (based at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji) on records management and archives.

Sarah Welland and Gillian Oliver of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand outlined options currently available in the distance education arena.

### ***Conservation workshop***

Preservation of documentary heritage in a tropical environment is a constant struggle, especially where funds are severely limited. Participants heard a report from Ted Ling of the National Archives of Australia on a PARBICA project to investigate the suitability of non-airconditioned shipping containers for archival storage. Ted also presented options for low-cost storage.

This was followed by a workshop on practical preventative conservation, conducted by Jocelyn Cumming of the National Preservation Office and Jonathon London from Preservation Services, Archives New Zealand.

### ***Government recordkeeping***

Ensuring accountable and well-managed government recordkeeping is a core mission of government archives institutions. Although legislation to regulate government recordkeeping is in place in almost 90% of Pacific

countries, policies and systems to support key aspects of these frameworks are often lacking.

David Brown, Public Records Office Victoria, Judith Russell, Archives New Zealand and Kelvin Smith, National Archives of the United Kingdom led a discussion of implementation of government recordkeeping programs while Brendan Boyle gave an overview of e-government initiatives in New Zealand.

### ***Pacific documentary heritage held in New Zealand***

Due to patterns of colonisation and trade, Pacific documentary heritage can be scattered across the archives of neighbouring countries and indeed the world. Several sessions at the conference described records held in New Zealand archives and other institutions that related to Pacific island nations, states and territories, including:

- Stephen Innes, a librarian responsible for the collection, gave a paper on the return of the Western Pacific High Commission records from the National Archives of the United Kingdom to the Pacific through placement at the University of Auckland;
- Pacific holdings of the McMillan Brown Library, Christchurch, by Jeff Palmer of the University of Canterbury;
- photographic and oral history holdings relating to the Pacific of the Alexander Turnbull Library that included a tour of the facility; and
- artefacts held at Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand.

### ***ACARM legislation workshop***

The Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM) organised a full-day workshop on legislation on Saturday 26 July. The workshop was chaired by Michael Hoyle (Chairman of ACARM) and speakers included John Roberts and Greg Goulding (Archives New Zealand), Ted Ling (National Archives of Australia), David Roberts (State Records Office NSW) and Kelvin Smith (National Archives of the United Kingdom).

Topics of discussion included a survey of legislation and other key issues from the world, Commonwealth and Pacific scenes and case studies from New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom and New South

Wales. Even though this was conducted on a Saturday and the last day of the Conference, delegates were enthusiastic and actively participating right up to the end.

### **Cultural and social activities**

Even though the delegates were worked very hard during the course of the Conference, there were some opportunities for cultural and social activities. The Conference was opened in accordance with Maori protocol and there was a Maori cultural performance and a visit to a Maori meeting house all conducted with appropriate ceremony.

On the opening evening the three local archives and records management organisations hosted a function for the delegates. A tour of Parliament Buildings was followed by an evening function hosted by the Minister responsible for Archives New Zealand and the National Library. On the Friday evening there was a conference dinner at a restaurant overlooking the city.

### **Sponsors and funding**

PARBICA 10 would not have been possible without the generosity of a large number of sponsors, in Wellington and internationally. This sponsorship was acknowledged in material about the conference, at the opening and closing of the conference and in the resolutions produced by the conference. PARBICA would again like to thank all those organisations which contributed their support.

Funds to run the conference, including covering costs for those attending from Pacific island nations, is raised from external funding sources. The National Archives of Australia and Archives New Zealand made significant contributions, including in-kind support. Major funds were contributed by AusAid, NZAid, Commonwealth Foundation, UNESCO, Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM), and the Canada Fund.

While Pacific island delegates clearly appreciate the chance to meet with colleagues, the magnitude of organisation and fundraising for a general conference every two years is large. PARBICA will be considering alternative options such as smaller sub-regional workshops and specific bi-lateral assistance (such as Australia providing expertise and materials to near neighbours the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Papua New

Guinea or New Zealand fostering development in the Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa).

### Conference outcomes

*What I liked about the Conference was that you really felt the support of the archivists etc from NZ/Australia, it gives you the feeling to have "mana" behind you, like the ancestor posts of the Marae, who will back you up when you need help to fulfil your task. (PARBICA 10 delegate).*

In the formal general meeting of the conference PARBICA delegates came to the following resolutions:

- to express their satisfaction with the successful workshops conducted within the meeting on project management, education and training, government recordkeeping strategies, preservation and storage techniques and archival reformatting through digitisation and microforms, and the valuable visits to archival institutions and services in Wellington, New Zealand;
- to re-affirm the importance of communications in the region and commit to increased use of email and the Internet as information sharing and educational tools, while recognising the continued importance of alternative options of communication where the necessary services for email access, such as reliable electricity supply or affordable telecommunication services, are not yet in place;
- to acknowledge the fundamental importance of easily accessible training provided in the workplace and through educational institutions, and agree to continue to encourage the establishment and accessibility of distance education in archives and records management for Pacific island countries, such as those offered at Wellington Open Polytechnic and under consideration at the University of the South Pacific;
- to recognise the extreme importance of well managed records and archives systems for accountability in the public sector and for good governance, and therefore urge that all reform projects include a records management component and that consultants involved have the necessary competence in records management;

- to acknowledge the aspirations of the Pacific Pathways initiative of UNESCO, while recommending that priority should be given to the development of electronic database systems for administering Pacific archives before their digitisation;
- to request the PARBICA Bureau develop a five-year strategic plan, 'Pacific Archives 2008', of priority steps for building the capacity of each archives in the region, based on a needs assessment for Pacific archives
- to appreciate the return of the Western Pacific Archives to the Pacific region, urge that the negatives of the microfilms of part of these archives be located and the preservation reformatting of the remainder be continued, and that both be made available to the successor governments of the Western Pacific High Commission;
- to express solidarity with our colleagues and concern for the people in the Solomon Islands, draw the attention of all concerned parties to the importance and vulnerability of the Solomon Islands National Archives and urge that all necessary actions be taken ensure their protection in accordance with the principles of the Hague Convention 1954 and its protocols;
- to express appreciation for the generous support from NZAid, Archives New Zealand, the Commonwealth Foundation, the International Council on Archives, UNESCO, AusAid, the National Archives of Australia, the Canada Fund, and the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM), and also the contributions made by the Australian Society of Archivists Inc., Paradise Canyon Systems, Lundia Shelving, Metal Edge Archival Storage Supplies, and NZ Micrographic Services Ltd;
- to express special thanks to the following for the honour of their participation and their support: Hon. Marian Hobbs, Minister Responsible for Archives New Zealand; Dianne Macaskill, Chief Executive and Chief Archivist, Archives New Zealand; Joan van Albada, Secretary General of the ICA; the National Library of New Zealand; Mark te One, Sam and June Jackson and the Wellington Tenths Trust; Dick and Patricia Grace, and the Hongo Eka marae; Ngāti Pōneke kapa haka group; Standards New

Zealand; Te Papa; the Wellington City Archives; the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand; the Records Management Association of Australasia, and the New Zealand Society of Archivists;

- to record their appreciation to the archivists (especially Ted Ling) and organisations that have contributed to the implementation of PARBICA's projects on low-cost records storage, and development of distance education programs between 2001 and 2003; and
- to express their deep gratitude and appreciation to Michael Hoyle, Ken Scadden and Jenn Churchward, Archives New Zealand, and the PARBICA 10 organising team for their magnificent efforts in bringing about this well-organised, interesting and educational conference and for the splendid hospitality they arranged.

### **PARBICA 10, Wellington, New Zealand, 21–26 July 2003**

*Correspondent: Ewan Maidment, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau*

The 10<sup>th</sup> biennial conference of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives was held in Wellington from 21 to 26 July. It was a great pleasure to renew friendships with colleagues from all over the Pacific Islands and to make the acquaintance of others. For this reason the conference was very enjoyable, but it was also informative and much useful business was conducted.

The conference was organised by Archives New Zealand with the assistance of the Turnbull Library and a troop of local archivists. It was attended by government archivists from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and most Pacific Islands nations, except the Solomon Islands, Nauru, East Timor, the Marshall Islands and Tokelau. A number of other NZ university libraries and local government archives participated, including the University of Auckland Library, the Macmillan Brown Library at Canterbury University and the Wellington Public Library.

Other institutional participants were the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the University of Guam, the University of Papua New Guinea, the National University of Samoa, the International Records Management Trust (UK),

the International Council on Archives and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau.

The opening sessions, a round-up of reports from the participants and a panel on latest archival developments, were very informative:

- The Micronesia Area Research Center might be disbanded. Its manuscripts and Spanish documents collections are being transferred to the University of Guam Library.
- Acute accommodation problems were reported by a number of government archives, most urgently in Niue and Guam, but also in the Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei), Samoa and Fiji. The University of PNG Library is considering using containers to hold additional archives. Funding for new government archives repositories is being sought in Vanuatu and Fiji. In the Cook Islands some funding has been allocated toward completing the new government repository.
- Public service reforms have cut staff in the National Archives of Vanuatu to one full-time position. The University of PNG reported difficulty in finding trained staff. Negotiations with the University of the South Pacific for the establishment of a course on records management and archives administration appear to have bogged down over funding. However the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand has just established an attractive and accessible course.
- Land records and periodicals are being digitised in the Territorial Archives in French Polynesia. The challenge of digitisation is important at the University of PNG, where the University's stated mission is to externalise its programs, and in Kiribati where the National Archives would like to digitise all land registers and Land Court minutes.
- There is a trend toward university libraries taking responsibility for the administration of government archives. The University of Auckland Library has taken over the Western Pacific Archives. The College of the Northern Marianas administers the Northern Marianas government



archives and holds a set of the Trust Territory microfilms. The College of Micronesia in Pohnpei is the joint administrator of the Federated States of Micronesia central government archives. Negotiations are taking place for Samoan government archives to be accommodated and administered by the National University of Samoa.

- The principles of records continuum, linked with accountability in recordkeeping, which have won favour in government archives in the UK, NZ and Australia, are being extended to records production throughout the public administrations of those countries through concerted publicity campaigns and regulations. The World Bank, Public Sector Reform Division, and the Records Management Trust have produced a video on accountability and good recordkeeping in public administration, 'Evidenced Based Government in the Electronic Age'. The video, which includes interviews with several Pacific archivists, was shown at the conference.

#### *PARBICA General Meeting*

Setareki Tale's term as President of PARBICA expired. He had lead the organisation with a steady hand and represented it with great dignity in the international arena. The general meeting elected Michael Hoyle, of Archives New Zealand, as the new PARBICA President. An unusual move as the Presidency usually goes to an Islander. Jacob Hevelawa, of the National Archives of PNG, was elected Vice-President. Salesia Ikaniwai, National Archives of Fiji, was elected Secretary-General. Kathryn Dan is continuing as Treasurer, temporarily, pending a reorganisation of the National Archives of Australia.

Among other resolutions, the general meeting urged all parties in the Solomon Islands to recognise the value of the National Archives of the Solomon Islands (NASI) and to take steps to safeguard its holdings. This resolution reflected general concern about the security of the NASI holdings and its staff. As custodian of other parts of the Western Pacific Archives, Stephen Innes, among others, expressed concern about the condition of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate archives in Honiara.

## Niue National Archives, Country Report to PARBICA 10

*Correspondent: Joan Talagi, Assistant Archivist, Niue National Archives*

The Niue National Archives, constituted under the Archives Act 1992, is a section of the Community Affairs Department, now working alongside the Niue National Library.

A government housing unit has been leased out to the Archives and Library since 1996. The landowner has requested these two sections to move out in 2004 as the land lease has expired. It is a major problem for the Archives, as it will be the third time that this section has been moved from one place to another. Niue's historical records are deteriorating under very poor storage conditions.

In 1992 there was a proposal put through for a new building for Archives, but somehow along the line there was a miscommunication between the management and the people who look after the Archives so the new building has not eventuated.

At the moment we only have one staff member working in the Archives. Diamond Tauevihi left Archives at the end of last year for New Zealand with her family. She will be away for the next 3–4 years depending on the length of her husband's studies. There are no professional or technical staff in Niue qualified in archives administration, only staff who have gained experience on the job. I see that there is a great need to train someone in this area of work so that the Archives would benefit from the latest technologies and archival work-skills.

The Archives unit keeps historical records dating back to the turn of the century. Most of these records are worthwhile keeping but we have disposed of some which are not worth keeping. We have a recordkeeping policy within the government departments which requires retention of files for a set term before disposal.

We do not have any set format for arranging the records held at our Archives, except manual registration. There is no computer in the Archives unit to facilitate records control. Most of the records we have are on the floor in one big room. The size of our collection is growing beyond the capacity of that room as government departments transfer further files into the Archives. We have a very poor storage space for

these records. It is almost impossible to conserve records without a proper building for Archives.

Nevertheless we have had some success in locating information when requested by members of the public and government officials. The Archives also receives a few overseas requests to locate information in old records.

An archives repository has been the most needed government building since the Archives was established by the government some 25 years ago. Although there have been several attempts to put through proposals to establish a repository for Niue's historical records, up until today, 2003, nothing has been done.

The development of the Archives of Niue is still at a very low standard. We had a consultant who came to Niue some years back to look into the standard of our Archives and to assist Niue with drawing up a building plan for the Archives. I am not sure what became of the proposal. As an Assistant Archivist I see a great need for Niue to have a special building for the historical records of this country. Therefore may I humbly ask for assistance with finding funds to establish a building to accommodate Niue's needy archives.

## **Papua New Guinea: National Archives and Public Records Services**

*Correspondent: Jacob Havelawa, National Archivist*

### **Background to the Archives**

The National Archives was created as a separate archival activity in 1962, although a repository was established in 1957. It became a branch of the National Library Service in 1975, then a Division of the Department of Education. The National Archives and Public Records Services now form one of the two Divisions of the Office of Libraries and Archives, the other being the Library Service. The Office operates under the *National Libraries and Archives Act 1993*.

The mission of the National Archives is to appraise, select, acquire, arrange, describe, preserve and make accessible the public records of the national government and associated non-governmental records. This is done in order to ensure that the government's activities, plans,

programs and functions are documented fully and the history of the government and the nation is available to support continuing government operations and public research. This is done in accordance with the highest standards of archival profession.

The challenge for the National Archives of Papua New Guinea is to ensure a national policy on archives is adopted to embrace the provincial governments to maintain consistency, uniformity and impartiality, in the procedures and conditions adopted for the management and preservation of their records.

The National Archives is a state institution and its main source of funding is from the National Government. It operates on an annual budget of K460,000. Funds approved are lower than estimated so only crucial areas are being funded. Some areas have had to suffer because of the inadequate funding levels.

The National Archives raises revenue through the sale of microfilm and photocopies made of archival documents and reproduction of photographic archives. The proceeds are deposited in a trust account, which is then used to purchase consumable items for microfilming and the production of microfiche for sale. The money is also for the production of other publications put out by National Archives.

### **Human resources**

Staffing in National Archives remained a major problem because of resignations. From a staff of 14 in 2000, it has now been reduced to 13. Since 1999, four of its officers with University qualifications have resigned and joined other departments. The National Archives is now left with one professional officer who is the National Archivist and a support staff of twelve. There has been no recruitment as the government has put a stop to recruiting new staff.

### **Building and equipment**

Three buildings and a subsidiary storage area are being used by National Archives to house its records. A new building opened in 1988 and is being used to house the archival documents or permanently valuable materials (which are more than 30 years old) and for personal files of all departments, as these are most frequently sought by researchers. Also, all photographs, tapes and microfilms are kept there.

The others buildings are used for semi-current storage. The old building and a subsidiary storage room are used for semi-permanent records less than 30 years old. It is known as the Intermediate Records Centre.

Equipment in the buildings used to store records consists of static and compactor shelving and specifically cabinets to store maps and plans, slides and photographs, computer disks and microfilms and fiche.

### **Acquisition, arrangement and appraisal**

One of the major activities undertaken by the professional staff is to identify and describe series from groups of records and eventually produce guides go these records. These are records considered to have research and informational value and are accessed quite often by researchers.

The production of guides and other finding aids to service the use of records in the Archives is an activity undertaken by the National Archives. So far three guides have been produced to three departmental groups of records. It is anticipated that another two will be ready for publication before the end of 2003.

A total of 10,500 European staff files and 10,200 Attorney-General's files were appraised for disposal and retention.

### **Preservation**

The records transferred from the government departments are being boxed in the standard archival boxes or as part of their microfilming projects. Microfilming projects have not been able to provide effective and efficient services over the years due to lack of a well-equipped laboratory and shortage of staff. A well-equipped National Microfilm Laboratory is still needed.

### **Use of the archives**

During the year a total of 1584 researchers used the services and had access to records we have in custody. Of departmental records officers and others, a total of 310 visited the National Archives on a familiarisation tour. There has been a steady flow of enquiries through correspondence, telephone and in person. Attention is being paid to efficient and helpful service which will bring people in as well as good displays and publicity. The National Archives continues to educate

the public about Archives and how we can assist with information sought by various people.

### **Public programs**

Exhibitions have not been actively promoted by National Archives due to insufficient resources, however excerpts from the archives have been published in the daily papers to commemorate special events in history and also to promote literacy programs.

Visits and tours to the National Archives are organised for student groups and interested members of the public. Over 200 visits have been made over the years. Small sessions have been conducted to explain the role and functions of National Archives including a tour of the holdings.

In 1996, the office resurrected its monthly newsletter called *OLA Nius*, formerly known as the *National Library Nius*. *OLA Nius* aims to keep librarians, archivists and other people informed on news, events and progress made within the office. The newsletter is distributed nationwide as well as to national libraries and selected institutions and information networks abroad.

National Book Week (NBW) is the main book and reading promotion campaign in PNG. NBW is planned and organised by a committee formed under the auspices of the Office of Library and Archives. Each year NBW continues to grow in effectiveness because of the effective use of the media and other publicity avenues. National Archives continues to assist with this event in talking to students and groups on Archives and its functions.

The Office of Library and Archives continues to actively get involved with National Literacy Week activities through its planned programs.

### **Records management**

The training of records officers particularly in the Public Service has been a priority to National Archives. Senior Archives Officers have been involved in this exercise and so far over fifteen workshops have been conducted. The aim of the workshops is to educate records managers on the use of accepted records and archives management methods to create, maintain, use and dispose of records.

Over 200 records officers have participated in these workshops. As a follow-on from the workshops some officers have arranged with their respective organisations to undertake the Certificate Course offered by the Department of Library and Information Studies, at the University of Papua New Guinea.

It has been observed during the workshops that a lot of registry clerks in these government departments have not been trained in archives and records management. Most of them had one or two day induction courses conducted by their training officers and have been in the registries for most of their working life, without any further training.

National Archives provide advice and assistance to government instrumentalities on proper records management. In doing so we have produced a publication to be used by Records Officers in the Public Service as a guide to create, maintain, use and dispose of records in accordance with accepted records management and archival practice. The publication is titled *Advisory Services to Government Departments and others*.

Visits were made to eight government departments and statutory bodies. Six provincial visits were also made to assist and give advice on proper records management practices. These were followed up with records management workshops, reports and recommendations.

These assessments revealed that:

- There is lack of proper storage facilities or separate records rooms to store semi-current and non-current records. As a result records are stored in run-down buildings, along corridors and in the ceiling of offices; and
- there is a lack of proper procedure guidelines or registry manuals for records clerks to use as guides to create, maintain, use and dispose of records. The possibility of records being lost or inadvertently destroyed through inefficient filing system and storage practices is imminent in the Public Service.

The above situation in the public service is a major concern to the National Archives and with its limited resources; it is not able to make any significant improvement in all the above areas.

### **Photographic archives and microfilms**

A collection of photographs kept at the National Archives have been arranged and described. In 1990, a volunteer worker (Mrs Carol Dalziel, wife of a librarian) helped with the sorting and then designed a computerised Photographic Description and Index Sheet. Only 9,000 slides are numbered, the rest are in rough subject or area order with little detail. Not all negatives match contact prints or vice versa. Photo enlargements have yet to be stored, arranged and described.

Previously, microfilms from wherever they were obtained remained the responsibility of the Chief Micrographic Officer. The public have never used them in the reading room. Machines have now been installed and it has been good conservation practice to restrict the use of fragile originals and oblige the public to use the films.

### **Computerisation**

Automation of records to allow for quick and easy retrieval of information about the records in the Archives was introduced at the National Archives in 1989. It started with a gift of a computer and eventually three computers were purchased four years later.

Emphasis is to automate records that have been arranged, described and have guides produced to them. Over 50,000 records have been automated. The software packages (CDS/ISIS) created and distributed by UNESCO is used in this exercise.

### **Tuvalu National Archives and Library, Country Report to PARBICA 10**

*Correspondent: Togiola Funafuti, Assistant Archivist, Tuvalu National Archives and Library*

The Tuvalu National Archives is still combined with the Tuvalu National Library under the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The Archives was established in 1977 after the separation of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Part of the collection was transferred from the Western Pacific Archives in Fiji. One of the rooms in the building which the Archives still shares with the Library is used to accommodate its holdings of the Archives.



From PARBCA 9 in 2001 to this year there have not been many developments in the Archives. This is mainly due to the shortage of staff and lack of funding. However, the Archives still survives on very limited funds allocated from the National Government.

The building in which the Archives is accommodated is an old Red Cross building. The room in which the Archives' holdings are stored was specially built for it as airconditioning is used for conservation. There is no reading room specifically designed for the Archives but the Library reading room is used to accommodate researchers using the Archives. This is due to the limited space in the Archives.

Acid-free boxes are used to store documents, files and reports. There is no specific processing area, instead the staff use their office. There is a need to upgrade the building to two-storeys, as the present building is no longer sufficient to accommodate the Archives.

The Archives is staffed by Mila Tulimanu and her assistant. They have been trained in basic archival work at the National Archives of Malaysia. Training is imperative. It is a requirement that has to be implemented as it builds the confidence and ability of the staff.

The records held in the Archives are mainly government closed files, land records, and births, marriage and death registers. There are some private papers, such as theses, and a few photographs and maps. The composition of the records is as follows:

Government closed files	70%
Land records	15%
Births, marriages & death	13%
Others	2%

The public is aware that the Archives exist and most of the inquiries are for births and marriages information. Another demanding type of inquiry is for land rights and family genealogies to settle disputes in land courts. The government usually makes requests to consult past reports and closed files. Researchers and locals also read past papers and reports for their work. Conservation work is necessary for our archives, as the majority of our old documents are very fragile. Currently we have no trained staff to carry out the necessary conservation work. However basic work, copying some of the fragile documents, has been done and is still continuing.

Exhibitions are needed to promote public awareness. Annual reporting also needs to be encouraged and revitalised, as it provides a record that promotes the development and continuing effort of the Archives.

Short to medium term training to upgrade the work in the Archives will need to be taken up in the first half of year 2004. It is recommended that Fiji be used as the venue for this requirement as it is cheap and near to Tuvalu. After the training, there is a need for an expert consultant to advise on upgrading the archives. A visit by a consultant archivist to assess, advise on and plan the best available method, most suitable for our present condition, is required. UNESCO has been requested to assist in this matter.

There is a great need to be able to use the Internet for research and transmitting information from the Archives. Arrangements have been made to install an Internet connection and we are hoping to be hooked up in the near future. However there has been a delay caused by the two parties concerned, the Computer Department and Telecommunications.

## Yap State Archives

*Correspondent: Cheryl Stanborough*

This could easily be a report focusing on the negative things that have occurred in the past twelve months. That would be pity as there has been the odd positive thing as well.

**Positive:** In February I was finally given the keys to the refurbished building that now houses the Archives. Farewell forever to the water tank, concrete cancer, rats and land crabs. And a good thing too, as the airconditioning had ceased to function and it was as hot as Hades. Not too good for the records but just as difficult on the humans.

**Negative:** The new building leaks. The response of Public Works: 'It's a design fault.' My response: 'But you designed it!' Their response: 'But we're not engineers. What do you expect, this is Yap.'

**Positive:** The building is clean, light and comfortable and we have our own toilet.

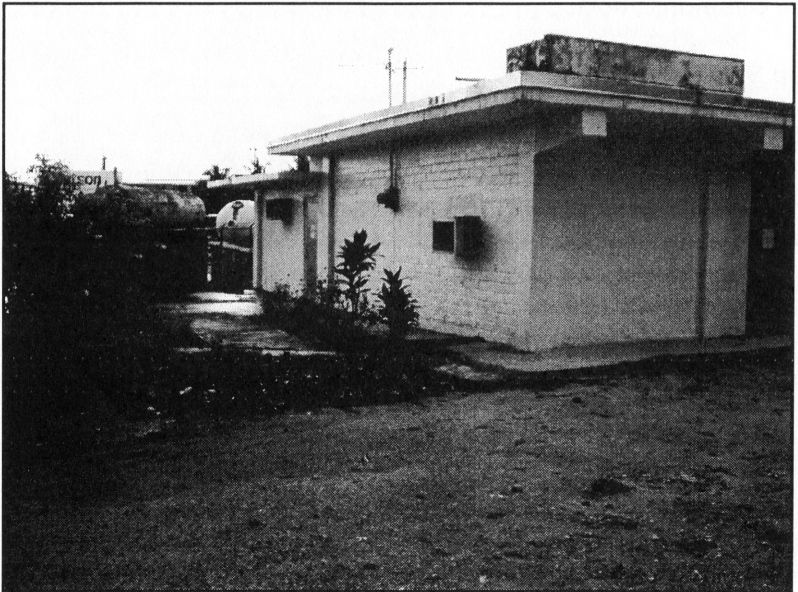
**Negative:** The termites moved in before us.

**Positive:** I was able to purchase 2000 polypropylene archives boxes from Australia just before the end of the financial year when about \$20,000 suddenly appeared in the Archives' budget. This financial year the Legislature approved additional money to pay for desperately needed shelving for the new building.

**Negative:** Due to a certain amount of skulduggery the entire Archives' budget has gone, vanished, never to be seen again.

**Result:** no shelving – but I have the money to ship it.

On a personal note, the day I got the keys to the Archives I also got the keys to my permanent accommodation and was told to move the next day. I had been here seven months. So now I have a small house. I have mud under the bed and share it with mice that I am becoming adept at murdering, cane toads that go squelch when you tread on them and geckos that are rather cute.



The Yap State Archives building

During the year I worked through the rest of the court records, the Attorney-Generals' records and I am part-way through the Governor's office records. These records are a treasure trove of information and are already being used by visiting researchers. The Yapese are also beginning to use the Archives looking for information, primarily relating to land disputes. I've written a short, very basic recordkeeping manual, paid personally to have a hundred copies printed (no budget remember?) and go out armed with it to the various government departments. Here I spread the good word as many offices here have allowed whatever system they originally had to fall completely into disuse. For instance, the Governor's office had eight years worth of records stored as loose paper sitting in boxes all over the office. This has finally been tamed and a system is now in place. Both the Governor and the poor woman who inherited the mess are happy people, which make me happy as well.

All of this is very slow work. Things take a very long time here. People sit back and watch you. You must prove yourself before they begin to trust you, and you must be prepared to be patient. Things do begin to happen, gradually. It's easy to get despondent and think you aren't succeeding which is a mistake. It's just that you learn to savour life's small victories and keep plugging away.