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PAMBU NEWS

The Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) became an associate member of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau in May. As the region's peak archival organisation, PARBICA has had *ex-officio* presence on the PMB Management Committee, giving valuable advice and guidance to the Bureau since the early 1990s. By becoming an associate PMB member PARBICA wishes to express its support for the Bureau and to formalise the relationship between the two institutions which have common interests in supporting Pacific archives administration. PARBICA does not wish to receive the PMB microfilms. On behalf of the PMB, Professor Lal has expressed his appreciation to PARBICA for the support of a kindred institution.

The Bureau distributed 101 reels of microfilm to the PMB member libraries in mid January.

Information sheets and reel lists for the new PMB Microfilm Series titles are accessible from the PMB's on-line database catalogue at <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pambu/>

Recent PMB field work has consisted of the following trips:

- Melbourne, 2 February, to the Library of the Bible College of Victoria, Lilydale, to return microfilmed archives of the Unevangelized Fields Mission and to select a further batch of UFM archives for microfilming at W & F Pascoe P/L, under agreement with Yale Divinity Library.
- Newcastle, 20 February, to microfilm correspondence of Carl Diercke, of Tinputz (Woskawitz) Plantation, Bougainville, held by his grandson, Chris Diercke.
- Currumbin and Brisbane, 26-27 February, to make digital copies of paintings of Captain Brett Hilder held by Jean-Louis Boglio, to meet with

PNG NATIONAL ARCHIVES PROVINCIAL RECORDS PROJECTS

Since 2000 the National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea has carried out records rescue projects in nine PNG Provinces. In each case two Officers of the National Archives visit the Provincial capital and all districts of each Province. The records are surveyed by the Archives Officers. All Provincial and District Records Officers are called in for a three-day workshop on basic records management. Provincial authorities are encouraged to establish a Records Centre and Records Officers are instructed on how to bring in records, identify records for disposal and take care of those for retention at the storage centre.

So far, the PNG National Archives records rescue projects have been carried out in East Sepik (Wewak), Madang Province, Morobe Province (Lae), East New Britain (Rabaul and Kokopo), New Ireland (Kavieng), Central Province, North Solomons (Buka and Kieta), Milne Bay (Alotau), and Enga Province (Wabag).

Two National Archives Officers will be travelling to Sandaun (West Sepik) Province in late May 2009. Based at Vanimo, they will travel by vehicle to Aitape and then by boat to other district centres. A call will be made to all Records Officers from West Sepik Districts to attend a records management workshop in Vanimo.

The PNG National Archives funds these rescue projects from its own budget. There is no assistance from the Provincial governments. However the Morobe Provincial Government is going ahead with plans to construct a new Records Centre in Lae, including a library. The National Archives plans to undertake two Provincial projects each year. If there are enough funds, a second project will be carried out this year in the Southern Highlands Province (Mundi).

Elias Masuali
Acting PNG National Archivist
May 2009

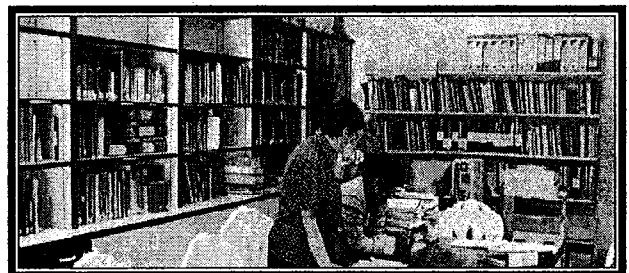
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ARCHIVES RELOCATION STARTS TO YIELD TREASURES

[This article was first published in the *Vanuatu Daily Post* on Thursday 16 April 2009. Re-published with permission from *Vanuatu Daily Post* and Dr. Matthew Spriggs.]

The dedication of the two national librarians, Ann Naupa and June Norman, has led to the relocation to the Cultural Centre of what has been up to now the completely-neglected National Archives. Previously stored, in an unsecured building and essentially inaccessible to students of Vanuatu's history, the collection is at least now safe. But it will require an enormous effort and commensurate resources to get the material catalogued and conserved. After its years of neglect some of the collection is now in very poor condition.

It is fair to say that over the years the dominant view among the Powers-That Be about the Archives has been that it is "samting blong ol waetman nomo", only about the history of the colonial powers. This of course can't be true of the post-1980 Independence records held there. But it is also NOT true of the pre-Independence records either, and the Authorities need to be convinced to take the Collection seriously and develop a plan for its future, including the long-promised dedicated Archives building adjacent to the National Museum.



Vanuatu National librarians Ann Naupa and June Norman.

I will try to demonstrate the value of the Archives to the people of Vanuatu with the remarkable story of a single small "treasure" which has come to light as part of the relocation process. The document was found by Jimmy Kauatonga, Curator of the National Museum, during an initial sorting of the collection that has just got underway within the last couple of weeks. It is a book of the marriage records of the island of Aneityum between 1914 and 1952. Dry stuff, you might think. But it is in fact a key document for the history of that Island.

Jimmy mentioned the find to me, knowing that I have had a thirty-year interest in Aneityum's history. I rushed straight to the National Library to have a look. The first entry can no longer be read but the second reads "Yaufati of Umej and Nisinakro of Umej married at Anelcauhat Church 20 Dec. 1914. Officiating elder Nadunipcev". Of the first 20 marriages recorded between 1914 and 1917, in 13 of them the bride and groom are from the same island district. This follows the traditional Aneityum practice of marrying within the district, mentioned by the missionaries as being insisted on by all concerned long after the population became Christian in the 1850s and 1860s.

This pattern of marrying within the district broke down completely in the period 1917 to 1935, with almost all marriages (73 out of 80) taking place between partners from different districts. But from 1936 until the last entry, number 132 for 1952, almost all marriages were between people of the same district, and almost all were from Anelcauhat, Umej or Aname (Port Patrick). So what happened to change time-honoured marriage arrangements?

Aneityum has the sad distinction of being probably the best-documented case of population collapse through introduced diseases in the entire Pacific. As the first successfully-missionised island in Melanesia, it has remarkably good population census records from within a decade of the arrival of pioneer Presbyterian missionary John Geddie in 1848. But he was already following in the footsteps of sandalwood traders and others, and two major outbreaks of introduced disease had already occurred in the 18 years since the first documented landing of Europeans on Aneityum in 1830.

In 1854 the missionary census revealed a population of about 3800 people on the Island. Estimates from my PhD thesis on Aneityum suggest the population in 1830 could have easily been about 4600 to 5800 people; some writers have suggested it might have been as high as 10,000 inhabitants. In 1861 the missionaries recorded a devastating measles epidemic and one third of the entire population - more than 1200 people - died in a matter of months. As the people lamented at the time, there were not enough people left living to bury all the dead.

The population had no immunity to such introduced diseases and continued to decline sharply until by 1939 there were only 187 people left on Aneityum, a population crash of well over

ninety percent. This terrible story is revealed in the Presbyterian Church and Condominium records of the time, and was first documented by the demographer Norma McArthur in her PhD thesis in 1974. And what was true of Aneityum was probably also the case on many other islands – we just don't have the detailed records for other areas.

So back to our marriage records in the National Archives. Clearly by 1917 the population had declined so much that the traditional pattern of marrying the district could no longer be kept up. In December of that year missionary William Gunn recorded the total population as being "about 320". There were simply not enough people in each district to find suitable marriage partners. They were forced to find husbands and wives from other districts. But people still kept to living in their traditional districts, even as the overall population declined. The missionaries couldn't understand why people did not all concentrate in a few centres such as Anelcauhat and Umej in the south and Port Patrick in the north, but ancestral ties to land were strong. Then by 1936 the population had become so small, about 193 on the entire island, that people were forced to congregate in just a handful of districts. This again is reflected in the marriage register information.

With such death and distress, much knowledge of family ties to particular districts has been lost. Even the names of great-grandparents may not be fully remembered – people might recall the man's name, but not his wife. Or they may not know where they came from originally. All of this is recorded in the marriage register, however, and it will be of tremendous value to the Aneityumese as they seek to understand their history and re-establish their ties to the traditional districts on the island.

One of the most interesting things in the marriage records is the district names tied to the date of the marriage, as they show that there were still people living on their ancestral lands at that particular date. These lands were long-abandoned when I first went to Aneityum in 1978. As part of my PhD, and working with the oldest people on the island, I recorded many hundreds of names of village sites, taro swamps and garden areas and placed them on maps at that time. As well, many of the names are doubtless remembered on the island to this day. What the register gives us is a date when people still lived in inland districts

such as Anumej (at least up to 1927), Ohuul (1926) and Ipijcau (1919).

The register records the marriages too of some of the old men that I worked with in 1978, all but one of them now deceased many years ago: Wariso (married 1949), Balau (married 1946) and Tamadui of Kalili (married 1930). The latest marriage recorded in the book is the only one where one of the partners is still alive in 2009: Chief David Yautaea of Umej whom I also worked with in the late 1970s.

The marriage register is a vital document for all Aneityumese people, vital for establishing family history and connections to ancestral lands. With the help of Vanuatu Cultural Centre and Library staff I have spent my Easter holidays transcribing the register and we will be sending copies to Aneityum through the Cultural Centre fieldworker for the Island, Frank Inhat. So let us hear no more of the "Samting blong ol waetman" attitude to Vanuatu's National Archives! This treasure trove of information about Aneityum is just one out of thousands of valuable documents that the Archives contain. Many more remain to be found as the Collection is sorted through. But it requires that serious effort be made by the Government and all concerned – perhaps helped by Business sponsorship - to resource the cataloguing and preservation of the Nation's history.

The need for an Archives building at the National Museum site needs to be shifted up the priority list; at present it seems to be near the bottom. And a building isn't enough. There is also need for trained staff dedicated to maintaining the collection.

When Rakasa of Anahija (Anaia) and Necreiyag of Anejpou (Anejpou) were married at Anelcauhat Church on 5 May 1921 by Elder Name, they could never have known that one day the recording of that event might be a vital part of putting together the history of Aneityum and reconnecting families with their ancestral lands. Without the dedication of Anne Naupa and June Norman in saving the Archives by relocating it to the National Library in the face of general indifference from almost everybody, we would never know either.

Dr. Matthew Spriggs
April 2009

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NOTES ON PMB FIELD WORK IN EAST NEW BRITAIN, MAY 2009

The main aim of this fieldwork was to microfilm remaining unidentified volcanological records at the Rabaul Volcanological Observatory. In addition it was planned to locate and if possible microfilm a journal of the Sacred Heart Missionaries, *Hiltruper Monatshefte*, in the MSC library at Vunapope.

Nine reels of microfilm were made, as follows:
PMB 1327 RABAU VOLCANOLOGICAL OBSERVATORY, Additional volcanological records, 1953-2008. Reels 1-5. (Restricted access.)
PMB Doc 500 *Hiltruper Monatshefte* (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart), Vols.3, 5-10, 12-13, 1886, 1888-1893, 1895-1896. Reels 1-4. (Available for reference.) See Reel Lists for details.

The PMB work at the RVO is being carried out in conjunction with the GeoScience Australia-RVO Twinning Project. The PMB fieldwork was timed to coincide with the visit of Wally Johnson, the Twinning Project Convenor, and Shane Nancarrow, the Project Manager. Dr Johnson was convinced that there would be volcanological records in addition to those identified by the PNG National Archives and microfilmed by the Bureau during my visit in May 2007.

There had been heavy rain in East New Britain. The road between Kokopo and Rabaul was flooded and washed out in several spots by banks of ash and mud. The mud had washed through houses and businesses in Rabaul, but Tarvuvur was quiet – no eruptions or rumbles, just masses of gaseous vapour being blown away from the town by the trade wind. A grader was clearing the roads and everyone in Rabaul was hoping for a period of relief from the constant rain of ash from the volcano. A meeting of hundreds of Highlander landowners was being held in Kokopo to negotiate a compensation agreement for a Liquefied Natural Gas project at Lake Kutubu. Accommodation at Kokopo and Rabaul was scarce, but luckily Mr Nancarrow let me share his room at the Rabaul Hotel until another room became free.

Shortly after arrival at the Observatory on Tuesday 5 May I participated in a special meeting of RVO senior staff, chaired by Ima Itikarai, RVO Head, which discussed the development of the RVO information management system (IMS) in general and the PMB preservation reformatting project in particular. Dr Johnson reported that AusAID had extended the Twinning Project to the