

PACIFIC MANUSCRIPTS BUREAU

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Report on PMB visit to Honolulu, 16-22 March 2008

Dr Evelyn Ellerman, of Athabasca University, Canada, visited the PMB in November 2007 in search of materials documenting indigenous literary history in Papua New Guinea. Athabasca University is an open university specialising in distance education. Subsequently Dr Ellerman invited me to participate in discussions on production of a website for Pacific book culture and archival resources. Brij Lal approved my participation. The discussions were held at the Hamilton Library, 17-20 March. All expenses were met by Athabasca University (AU).

The other discussion participants were:

Associate Professor Evelyn Ellerman, Centre for State and Legal Studies, Athabasca University
Dr Steven Windou, Language and Literature Department, UPNG, currently at Minesota University
Dr Karen Peacock, Curator Pacific Collection, Hamilton Library University of Hawai'i
Mr Stuart Dawrs, Librarian, Pacific collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai'i
Ms Stella Lee, Instructional Media Analyst, Educational Media Development, Athabasca University
Ms Corrine Bosse, Instructional Media Analyst, Educational Media Development, Athabasca University
Professor Vilsoni Hereniko, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, UH, joined the discussions for one afternoon.

The website now under development focuses on Papua New Guinea literary history. It is intended for use in teaching Pacific literature and journalism courses, particularly those at Athabasca University (AU), Minesota University, University of Hawaii, the University of PNG and the Divine Word University. The material would be on open access and available to any other users. The aim is to launch a pilot website holding PNG materials and then extend to gathering literary materials for companion websites covering other Pacific Island nations, under the umbrella title, "Pacific Print and Performance Media".

Following guidelines set by AU Press, the meeting gave systematic consideration to website governance, management, structure, design, content, maintenance, development and associated legal matters, including copyright and disclaimers.

The content of the PNG pilot website <<http://salsa.athabascau.ca/png/index.php>> consists of materials gathered by Dr Ellerman for her research on the literary history of PNG, including a time-line, data on key literary figures and associations, together with papers and interviews from the *PNG Then and Now* conference, Sydney University, July 2002. The PNG website will be restructured and expanded to include out-of-print, rare and difficult to obtain texts, including copies of PNG literary magazines, and also possibly PNG newspapers. It is also planned to publish a series of occasional papers on the website and it is hoped to give internet access to *Savannah Flames*, edited by Dr Windou, and published by the Language and Literature Department, School of Humanities, UPNG. There will be an interactive component aimed at encouraging contemporary literature and performance. The website is expected to be launched in time for the 2009 Southern hemisphere academic year. Contact will be made with course coordinators and others who have a potential interest in the material.

SPONSORING INSTITUTIONS

Australia: The Mitchell Library, Sydney
National Library of Australia, Canberra
The Library, Australian National University
New Zealand: The Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
The University of Auckland Library
United States: Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu
Library of the University of California, San Diego
Yale University Library, New Haven
University of Michigan Library

The indigenous literary history component of the website is not addressed, as far as I know, by any other archival preservation projects or archival institutions in PNG and promises results in this particular area well beyond the scope of the PMB's capacity. If extended Pacific-wide, the project will give a valuable new dimension to Pacific archives preservation. I have tentatively offered PMB support in two ways:

1. With permission of Nancy Lutton and the PMB Management Committee, make available for scanning PMB 1298, John Alexander KOLIA, (1931-1993), Correspondence, related papers and publications, 1978-1993, collected by Nancy Lutton. 1 reel. (Available for reference.) The cost of digitisation would be met by AU.
2. With permission of Prithvindra Chakravarti, microfilm UPNG English Department papers which Dr Chakravarti holds in Darwin. The microfilm would be distributed to PMB members in the usual way but selected parts would also be made available for inclusion on the website.

I have been invited to remain on the advisory committee for the pilot PNG Print website for the first year of its operation.

There was a chance for brief discussions with UH Pacific Collections staff. Stu Dawrs advised that Robert Koenig is holding papers of Bengt Danielsson in Tahiti. M. Koenig is concerned about long-term preservation of the Danielsson papers. The papers are extensive, and are in French, English and Swedish languages. I indicated that the PMB would be interested in making copies of the documents. Mr Dawrs said that he would be in contact with Mr Koenig and would ask him whether he would consider having the papers microfilmed by the PMB. We also discussed the possibility of meeting up in Port Moresby for discussions with the PNG National Archives about digitisation of Patrol Reports at a mutually convenient time. Stu and Kathy Creely are in Moresby on an acquisitions trip, 17-25 May, and I will be there on the way to Rabaul.

Karen Peacock suggested that the PMB participate more frequently in the PIALA conference which is to be held this year in Yap in November. I agreed that there had been no PMB participation in PIALA since its conference in Guam in 2000, but said that it would be difficult to participate this year as the Bureau had planned to attend the PHA conference in Suva in December and to carry out some microfilming projects while in Fiji at that time. Dr Peacock noted that the next PIALA conference would be in Fiji and I agreed that the PMB would participate if at all possible.

I returned copies of *Vanuatu Weekly: Vanuatu Hebdomadaire*, borrowed from UH Library for microfilming, to Lynette Furuhashi.

The Pacific Collection staff put on a delightful reception on the last evening of the discussions, attended by Albert Wendt, Vilsoni Hereniko, David Hanlon, Ruth Horie and other UH Library staff as well as the Pacific Collection staff, at which Steve Windou read some of his poems in Tok Pisin and English. I wish to thank Evelyn Ellerman for the opportunity to participate in the discussions, Athabasca University for funding the trip, and the Pacific Collection staff for their wonderful hospitality.

Ewan Maidment
PMB Executive Officer
28 Mar 2008