

PACIFIC MANUSCRIPTS BUREAU

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Report on PMB fieldwork in Vanuatu, 15-30 March 2010.

General.

This PMB fieldwork was mainly follow-up on work with Bishop Terry Brown, the Church of Melanesia Archivist, carried out in Vanuatu in July last year. The aims of this year's fieldwork in Vanuatu were:

- To complete identification, organisation and microfilming of Diocese of Vanuatu (DOV) archives held at Luganville in Espiritu Santo, in collaboration with Bishop Terry Brown, and under the auspices of Bishop James Ligo, Bishop of Vanuatu;
- To microfilm certain issues of the *Nabanga*, *Voice of the New Hebrides* and the *New Hebrides News* held at the National Library of Vanuatu in Port Vila in order to fill gaps in the PMB microfilms of those titles.

Work on the DOV archives was not completed during the visit: about 44 cartons of records, mainly from the 1990s, are still partially sorted or unsorted. Nine reels of microfilm of DOV archives were made:

- PMB 1333 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Bishop Derek Rawcliffe Papers, Santo, 1949-1980. Reels 3-8. (Restricted access.)
- PMB 1334 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Diocesan Papers, Santo, 1909-1995. Reels 1-3. (Restricted access.)
- PMB 1344 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Bishop Harry Tevi Papers, Santo, 1979-1986. 1 reel. (Restricted access.)
- PMB Doc 521 REO PASIFIKA. VOICE OF THE PACIFIC. LA VOIX DU PACIFIQUE, (Journal of the Pacific Churches Research Centre, Port Vila; edited by Rev. Brian Macdonald-Milne), No.1, 1980. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

Microfilm copies of missing issues of *Nabanga*, *Voice of the New Hebrides* and the *New Hebrides* were made at the National Library of Vanuatu and at the USP Emalus Campus Library. Microfilm copies were also made of the following newspapers held at the USP:

- PMB Doc 522 *Nakamal Le Néo-Hébridais* (edited by Jean-Eudes Barbier, Société de Presse et d'Éditions néo-hébridais, Port Vila), Nos.10-13, 15-60, Nov 1972-May 1974. 1 reel.
- PMB Doc 522 *Tan Union* (edited by G. Leymang and V. Boulekone, for Union Communautés des Nouvelles-Hébrides, Kapiel, John Frum and Tabwemassana, Port Vila), Nos.1-2, 4-7 and one un-numbered issue, Apr-22 Nov 1977. 1 reel.

Port Vila, 15-18 March.

By luck I met June Norman, the Vanuatu National Librarian, on the plane from Sydney to Port Vila. At the Vanuatu Cultural Centre on 16 March I accidentally met Ralph Regenvanu MP and the Australian High Commissioner, Mr Pablo Kang, and discussed with them the possibility of an Australian Government gift of an archives repository to mark the 30th anniversary of Vanuatu independence. The National Archivist, Anne Naupa, is now based in a converted storeroom on the ground floor behind the museum. She is being voluntarily helped by Augustine, a USP student. Among other things, they are identifying Vanuatu Supreme Court archives and listing them to a database. The Archives is routinely accepting transfers of non-current records from Vanuatu government agencies. There are now three roofed containers outside the Cultural Centre holding the archives. Mrs Naupa confirmed the possibility of Australian funding for construction of a building for the National Archives.

Mrs Naupa also mentioned that the proceedings of the Vanuatu Constitution Committee have been published recently (by the Parliament?) and she suggested that, since there are very few copies available, it would be worthwhile microfilming the publication, with permission. However I was not able to sight the publication as the Library's copy was being catalogued.

On Wednesday 17 March, with June Norman's permission, I microfilmed selected issues of the Library's copies of *Nabanga*, *Voice of the New Hebrides* and the *New Hebrides News*. That afternoon and evening, further issues of those newspapers, and sets of *Nakamal* and *Tan-Union*, were microfilmed at the USP Library, with permission of the Librarian, Margaret Kailo. The USP Library has a very strong set of Vanuatu newspapers, a number of which were donated by Bob Makin, current Editor of the *Vanuatu Independent*.

Before leaving Canberra, on Sunday 14 March, at the invitation of Rebecca Walker, of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, Brij Lal and I had lunch with Hon. Charlot Salwai, the Minister for Education in Vanuatu. Among other things, Mr Salwai advised the PMB to try to document the career of Vincent Boulekone leading up to and since independence.¹ There was no time to contact Mr Boulekone. However, by coincidence, when I met up with Bishop Terry Brown in Vila at lunch on the Wednesday, he expressed an interest in finding copies of the *Nakamal*. The *Nakamal* and *Tan-Union*, microfilmed at the USP Library, were organs of this 'moderate' movement in Vanuatu politics and include articles by and about Vincent Boulekone.

Again on Bishop Terry's advice, I made inquiries about the Vanuatu Christian Council, which probably operates out of the Presbyterian Church headquarters, but had no time to contact the Council. Arrangements to meet William Ganileo, UNCCD Coordinator, regarding reformatting of Vanuatu Lands Department files, were not successful as Mr Ganileo was travelling in the outer Islands during my visit.

Church of Melanesia, Diocese of Vanuatu, Sarakata, Luganville, Santo, 18-28 March.

Bishop Terry Brown, who had come from Honiara, and I travelled together in a small Harbin aircraft from Vila and were met at Santo by representatives of the Diocese. The Church of Melanesia (COM) Archbishop, The Most Revd David Vunagi, and General Secretary, Mr George Kiriau, were also visiting the Diocese, so Bishop Ligo and his Diocesan officers were preoccupied. I had booked accommodation at the Sarakata Mothers' Union but their guest house was full so I stayed with Bishop Terry at the Unity Park Hotel, about a 15 minute walk from the old Diocesan offices at Sarakata. The weather was hot and humid. There was plenty of rain and one strong earth tremor. We ate very well – fresh fruit and vegetables from the Luganville market and Santo beef.

On the afternoon of our arrival we surveyed the DOV papers at Sarakata, cleared building equipment which had been dumped in the rooms, set up a work space and made arrangements for electric power supply. The records were still packed in cartons on makeshift pallets as we had left them in July the previous year.

From Friday to Monday, 19-22 March, Bishop Terry and I sorted through the cartons recovering complete files where possible and identifying, classifying and filing loose documents and printed material for microfilming.

We focused on finding copies of DOV Synod, Council and Trust Board minutes, and sets of correspondence of the bishops: particularly the first two, Bp. Derek Rawcliffe, 1972-1980, and Bp. Harry Tevi, 1980-1990. In addition we collated papers on DOV parishes, educational and health organisations, and constructed files of copies of minutes, reports, newsletters, correspondence and other papers for the New Hebrides Advisory Council, Pacific Council of Churches, South Pacific Anglican Council (SPAC), Vanuatu Christian Council, the Pacific Churches Research Centre (Port Vila), the Vanua'aku Pati and other political parties, *etc.* A highlight was finding the last missing issue of *One Bread*, the Diocesan newsletter published during Rawcliffe's time (microfilmed at PMB Doc 499).

There was also a rare copy of *Reo Pasifika. Voice of the Pacific. La voix du Pacifique*, No.1, 1980 (Journal of the Pacific Churches Research Centre, Port Vila, edited by Rev. Brian Macdonald-Milne),

¹ See Vincent Boulekone, "The Politics of Tan-Union", in Howard van Trease (ed.) *Melanesian Politics: Stael blong Vanuatu*, pp.197-209.

which was microfilmed at PMB Doc 521. It includes articles by Sir John Guise on Christianity in PNG and by Grace Mera Molisa on women in Vanuatu, and two articles on Pacific archives administration.²

I set up the camera on the Monday afternoon and microfilmed through to the evening of 27 March. Bishop Terry stayed on until Saturday afternoon, 27 March, continuing to sort papers. He made arrangements for transfer of four cartons of identified and microfilmed archival documents to the Provincial Office of the Church of Melanesia in Luganville for safe storage. Staff from the Diocesan Office burnt about 20 cartons of low level financial records and duplicate documents on site at Sarakata.

The remaining records have been re-packed into about 44 cartons of partially sorted and unsorted papers, sealed, sprayed with insecticide and returned to pallets on the storage room at Sarakata. Eight stacks of papers being sorted have been left on open shelves.

Bishop Terry and I agree that one more visit will be required, in about March 2011, to complete sorting the Diocesan papers and documenting the administrations of Bishop Tevi in the 1980s and of Bishop Michael Tavoia in the 1990s.

Nagriamel, Fanafo, 27 March.

Bishop Terry's friends, Rev. George Loi and Rev. Alan Bogoru, arranged for a truck to take us to Fanafo to see Jimmy Stevens' grave on the Saturday morning before Bishop Terry was to leave for Port Vila. We met Jimmy Stevens' son, Franky Stevens, and his first wife, Jenny from Efate. We were shown the grave and visited the Catholic and Church of Christ churches. I asked Franky Stevens whether there were any Nagriamel records but he said that he did not know of any. Nevertheless it was a very interesting tour and a chance to see something of the rich countryside of Espiritu Santo.

Santo / Port Vila, 28 March.

I met Bishop James Ligo and George Salili, the Diocesan Secretary, at the airport at Santo, as they returned from a visit to Ambae. I reported to them on the work accomplished and indicated that another visit would be required to complete the work. Bishop Ligo said that he appreciated the work done so far and is happy for the work to continue whenever there is an opportunity.

In Vila I met Rev. Dr Keith Joseph, a lecturer at the Bishop Patteson Theological College in Guadalcanal, who suggested that the PMB consider microfilming theses held at the College.

Bishop Terry reiterated that there is a solid set of COM archives for microfilming in Honiara whenever the PMB is ready to undertake the work.

Ewan Maidment
PMB Executive Officer
6 April 2010

Appendices.

Appendix 1. Reel List. PMB 1333 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Bishop Derek Rawcliffe Papers, Santo, 1949-1980. Reels 1-8. (Restricted access.)

Appendix 2. Reel List. PMB 1334 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Diocesan Papers, Santo, 1909-1995. Reels 1-3. (Restricted access.)

Appendix 3. Reel List. PMB 1344 CHURCH OF MELANESIA, Diocese of Vanuatu, Bishop Harry Tevi Papers, Santo, 1979-1986. 1 reel. (Restricted access.)

Appendix 4. Draft Box List. Church of Melanesia, Diocese of Vanuatu, Diocesan Papers at abandoned HQ offices, Sarakata, Luganville, Santo, July 2009. Revised March 2010.

² One by Fr. Theo Cook SM on the Marist archives in the Pacific and the other by Rev. Brian Macdonald-Milne reporting on PEACESAT discussions on Pacific archives administration held in 1978 and 1979.