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**Trip Report**  
**PMB Fieldwork in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands,**  
**11-25 January 2011**



**Bishop Terry Brown (centre), Ms. Julian Chonigolo, Director of the Museum (far left) and staff of the Solomon Islands National Archive in the SINA Conference Room at the PMB thank you afternoon tea, Monday 24 Jan 2011.**

**Summary**

The main purpose of this trip was to:

- List and copy the Anglican Church of Melanesia archives (manuscript and periodical collection), held at the Solomon Islands National Archives, Honiara;
- List and copy the YWCA archives, Honiara;
- List and copy the district and provincial newsletters and the Islands printed news bulletins, held at the Solomon Islands National Archives, Honiara;
- List and copy the student theses at the Bishop Patteson Theological College, Kohimarama, Guadalcanal; and
- List and copy the Campbell family papers, Honiara (Fred Campbell was the first policeman in Makira who later became a plantation owner and was close to the Mamaloni family).

10 reels of microfilm were exposed producing the following PMB titles:

**PMB 1359 CHURCH OF MELANESIA** (Anglican Church in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), Selected archives, 1852-1932. Reels 1-5 (Available for reference.)

**PMB Doc 456 JOURNALS OF THE MELANESIAN MISSION** (Anglican Church of Melanesia), 1953-2011. Reels 1-2. (Available for reference.)

**PMB Doc 501 PACIFIC ISLAND COOK BOOKS.** (Available for reference) 1 reel.

**PMB 1360 YWCA**, Solomon Islands, Administrative records, 1975-2009. Reels 1-2. (Available for reference.);

**PMB 1361 BISHOP PATTESON THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**, Theses for the Diploma in Theology, Bachelor of Theology, and other staff papers, Kohimarama, Solomon Islands, 1970-2010. Reels 1-3. (Available for reference.)

## Solomon Islands National Archives (SINA)

### Church of Melanesia work at SINA

On Wednesday 12 January I began work with Bishop Terry Brown on the Church of Melanesia archives which are deposited at the Solomon Islands National Archives. Bishop Terry Brown (see photo below of Bp. Terry Brown in his new office at the Church of Melanesia headquarters) is



continuing his fine work of accessioning and describing the Church of Melanesia archives. In addition to describing the archives he is removing rusty staples and bulky binders and re-housing the archives in manila folders and archive boxes. The 60 archive boxes I sent to Honiara via DHL before I left arrived half way through my stay. I focused on copying some of the older navigational plot books, diaries and letters, (1851-1942) from early missionaries and lay people of the Melanesian mission.

Some of the diaries included sketches, such as the following entry from a diary by George Hunter Brown. Hunter Brown was a layperson from New Zealand. This is an excerpt from his journal when he accompanied the

Bishop John Richardson Selwyn on the "Southern Cross".

On the 21 May 1877, Brown writes: "By breakfast time, some 20 canoes had mustered round the ship, two of them lovely little things, a sort of Solomon Islands, "?", made of 5 or 6 bamboo lashed to cross pieces and tapering in front to a sharp point ornamented with a long curved tasseled of leaf and bamboo by way of prow, some of them at stern too. The paddler sits (of course not dry) with his legs stretched straight out in front of him."

Extract from Hunter Brown diary, 21 May 1877



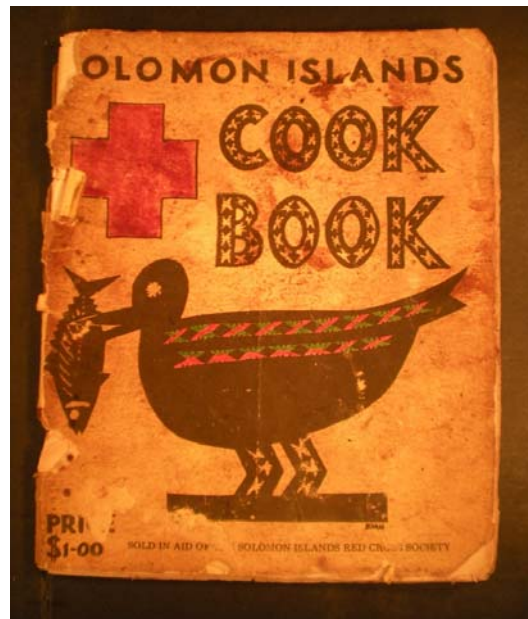
I also copied several journals (PMB Doc 456, 1958-2011), in Anglican Church of Melanesia archive including *The Melanesian Messenger*, *Melanesian Messenger*, *Melanesian Mission*, *Melanesia Today*, *Church of Melanesia Monthly Newsletter*, *Church of Melanesia Newsletter*, *Provincial Newsletter Church of Melanesia*, *Melanesian Newsletter*. The Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) Council of Bishops agreed to allow PMB to microfilm the ACOM journals and other pre-1975 ACOM archival material (email granting permission dated 9 Nov 2010).

Bishop Terry Brown kindly took me to the Church of Melanesia headquarters where I met the current General Secretary. He also showed me their meeting room which is decorated by several archival documents and artifacts relating to the Church of Melanesia.



The picture on the left shows church artifacts of exquisite, Solomon Islands style, shell-inlay in the Church of Melanesia meeting room, Honiara.

Bishop Terry also has a personal collection of historical cook books from the Solomon Islands (see Solomon Islands Red Cross cook book, c.1970s, below). I copied his cook books with a view to collecting more historical cook books from across the Pacific and releasing them as a PMB title in the future.



### **Meeting with Edna Sitai (nee Campbell) at SINA**

On Wednesday 12 January I met with Edna Sitai (nee Campbell). Edna is Jack Campbell's daughter, and is the granddaughter of Fred Campbell, the first District Officer for San Cristobal who was also a policeman in Makira who later became a plantation owner and was close to the Mamaloni family. Chris Chevalier, an Australian academic, told us of the Campbell family papers which he discovered as part of his research on Mamaloni, a former Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands. Edna's family have a cabinet of family papers at their plantation home on Makira. Edna said that she was unsure of the contents of the cabinet but she would go to the house and go through the papers. I encouraged her to make a list of the papers in the cabinet noting the title of the paper and the date. Chris Chevalier will return to the Solomons in July and is planning to visit Makira. He has offered to help Edna with the listing. I said to Edna that if there is original manuscript material in the cabinet, then the PMB would be interested in copying the documents. Chris is currently copying (scanning) papers relating

to the Mamaloni and Campbell families of Makira at the SINA and will provide PMB with a listing of this material at the end of his research.

### **YWCA, Solomon Islands**

On the afternoon of Wednesday 12 January I met with the board of the YWCA of the Solomon Islands who agreed to allow the PMB to copy and list the YWCA archives. The Solomon Islands YWCA was established in 1975 and became operational in 1978. The archive consists of minutes, programs,



activities and staff personnel papers. The documents had been sorted by year (although within each year they were not in date order) and individually placed in plastic pockets with a brief description on a sticker placed in the right hand corner of the plastic pocket by a former Youth Ambassador, Kiri Dicker.

Solomon Islands, YWCA Honiara Office

It was useful to have the descriptions to work with, however the microfilming was time consuming as each page had to be taken out of the plastic pocket, microfilmed (the paper was often different colour/texture which meant many light meter adjustments), then placed back in the plastic pocket and in the ring binder. I copied all papers, some of which included staff personnel papers which may be sensitive. On second thoughts, I should have just listed these papers, and not copied them. I will check with the YWCA on the restrictions they wish to apply, however I will suggest they place a restriction that requires contacting the YWCA before viewing the microfilm. I completed listings up until Dec 1990 and microfilming from 1975- Dec 1986. There are approximately 3 more binder folders (1987-2009) to list and copy.

### **Copying documents at SINA**

Prior to visiting the SINA I wrote to Ms. Julian Chonigolo asking her if the PMB could list and make copies of the district and provincial newsletters and the Islands printed news bulletins as well as a lands commission document from the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) reports, held at the Solomon Islands National Archives. I did not receive any reply from Julian or her staff.

When I arrived, Julian Chonigolo was on leave and Mrs. Margaret Infirm, the Deputy Government Archivist, explained to me that the current policy of SINA is to not allow any copying of documents from their collection. The SINA is working towards clarifying its policies, systems and guidelines in relation to access and hope to have them signed off, by the Department of Culture later this year. I feel that the staff at SINA need some assistance in developing these policies. Maybe PARBICA could run a workshop/session on access/restriction policies at their conference in August as the SINA and other Pacific archives would benefit from looking at other Pacific archive policies on access and restrictions and workshopping them with others.

To read and take notes from a SINA archival document, ex-patriate readers must visit the Ministry of Education (a 10 minute walk from the SINA), pay a research fee and receive a receipt. The research fee is not a license to copy, just to view the documents. Residents of the Solomon Islands pay a much smaller research fee at the Department of Culture and are only allowed to view the documents and take notes.

## Assistance for the SINA

Later in my stay, Ms. Julian Chonigolo, Director of the National Archives, returned from personal leave and I spoke at length with her about her feelings for the future of the archives. She said that she was trained as a teacher and although capable of operating the budget and managing staff, is interested in further developing her skills in the area of archives. Since Julian began work as the Director of the SINA, in 2008, she has concentrated on improving the building, including painting and cleaning much of the interior of the Archives, as well as the external garden area and recruiting young, capable, archive staff. Each archive staff member has a computer with the internet and air conditioning in their offices. The SINA subscription arrears for PARBICA have also been paid.



The SINA has recently received large cuts to their annual budget. There was a plan for an extension to the archival storage area, so that more Government records could be transferred to the SINA. Currently, there is a thirteen year backlog of Government records which still reside at the individual ministries. Bernard Rizu (Records Management Officer) has been training ministerial staff in how to use the PARBICA Good Governance Toolkit and it has been well received. However, as the extension to the SINA archive storage area has not yet been built, the ministries continue to retain all of their own records.

The picture above shows the small creek at the back of the archives swelling to near capacity after heavy rainfall. The fence is the perimeter of the SINA land and archival storage areas are nearby. In the past, the creek has flooded the back grass area of the archives as well as where archives are stored. Archives are not stored on the bottom shelves or floor of the storage area, so in the event of such flooding, they are safe.

A consultant undertook a review of the SINA storage area and produced a plan and design for the SINA extension, however the recommendations for a SI \$2 million (AU \$285,714) extension were too expensive and nothing has been done. In 2010 the SINA was given SI \$100,000 (AU \$14,285) for shelving and computers, however this amount, as well as their annual budget, was then cut by 35%. The 2011 budget will be issued in March 2011. Most of the annual budget goes towards staff salaries.

Julian and I discussed the main areas where the SINA could develop and produced the following list:

Audit of the collection, noting archives that have been lost. Many were lost during the tensions and many have been mis-shelved.

Consolidation of various lists and catalogues into one central SINA catalogue.

Regular program of fumigation.

Staff training and development.

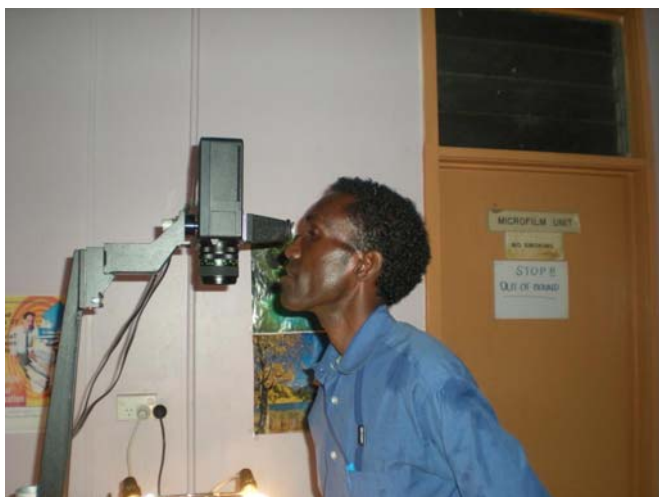
Development of reading room access and copying policies.

\*\*I said to Julian that I would look into the possibility of an Australian Volunteer being placed at the SINA to assist with building staff capacity and strengthening the archive.

Note: Adrian Cunningham recently updated me on some SINA history in the following email (date?):

“A few years ago an NAA staffer, Dani Wickman, was seconded to the Solomon Islands Govt/RAMSI by AusAID to help them improve their recordkeeping. She developed a new SIG Records Management Manual. It had been hoped at that time that she would be able to train/mentor the new National Archivist – but there were delays with Julian’s appointment and Dani came home before

Julian started. AusAID were then saying to us that they were happy to second another NAA person to Honiara to help role out training for the records management manual and also help train Julian – but AusAID never managed to commit the funds to this and changes in RAMSI personnel meant that they changed their plans and priorities. Also, a couple of NASI staff went on a training attachment to Archives NZ a while back.”



Benjamin Buka (see photo to the left), the microfilm officer, showed a keen interest in my work. The large format microfilm cameras at the SINA are all currently out of order and he asked many questions about current ways of copying and digitising archival documents for preservation purposes.

On my final day of work at the SINA I hosted a small afternoon tea to say “thank you” from the PMB for allowing me to work at the SINA and to strengthen our relations with the SINA staff. It was a great success, as Bp.Terry later said in an email to me: “I write simply to thank you for your visit. I believe it was productive in many ways and you were a very good representative of PAMBU. At your farewell "tea" I thought to myself that this was the first time since I arrived at the National Archives two years ago that I had been at a social event with all the staff, though I interact with each individually (email dated 27 Jan 2011).

### **Bishop Patteson Theological College, Kohimarama, Guadalcanal**

On Thursday 20 January I was to be picked up at 9am by the Bp. Patteson College Toyota Hilux to travel out to the College to list and copy student theses. Unfortunately it rained heavily during the night and the next morning and the Hilux had four flat tyres. Whilst waiting for another form of transport, I continued to work on the Anglican Church of Melanesia Archives at the SINA.

At 4:30pm the College truck came to the Archives and we drove West of Honiara out to the College at Kohimarama. The camera and my files were inside the cabin of the truck and I sat outside in the tray of the truck with twelve other students who were returning to the college to begin their studies at the start of the new school year. We crossed several creeks and rivers (see picture on right) that were quite deep, due to the heavy rain. The truck kept steaming/over heating each time we crossed a river and at one stage we stopped so that more water could be put into the radiator. We eventually arrived after a wet and muddy ride to the beautiful Kohimarama campus which was established in 1975. Prior to 1975, the Bp Patteson Theological College was located at Siota, Gela.



Accommodation at Bishop Patteson Theological College was provided at the College Guest house. It was a lovely clean guest house and my food was cooked by women from the Women’s Centre. The food included

local kai kai (food) such as lap lap, fish in coconut sauce, mince with carrots and tomatoes, boiled banana, rice, pineapples and pawpaw. I was the only guest at the guest house and the women and men of Kohimarama were very generous, ensuring that someone sat with me each night and talked to me whilst I had dinner in the guest house.

On the first morning I attended church at 6:30am and was introduced by the Principal to the community. I stood up and replied in Bislama, saying thank you for the welcome. I introduced myself and explained what the work of the PMB would involve at Bp. Patteson College.



Whilst at Kohimarama I worked in the large Charles Elliot Fox Memorial Library (see photo) built in 2006. The library was well equipped with power and wireless Internet. Outside the library are large water tanks and solar panels. At night, a generator provided power however the power was inconsistent which meant problems with the light meter. There were no ceiling or pedestal fans and microfilming became quite hot and sticky towards the late afternoon. I listed the Diploma (1970-2010) and Degree (2008-2010) theses of the students of the College. On Friday 21 January I began microfilming the theses (PMB 1361). I continued to microfilm the theses on Saturday 22 January, however there are still more to copy (1979-2010).



The photo to the left shows me microfilming student theses in the Charles Elliot Fox Memorial Library.

\*\*The Principal of the school asked me to provide them with a written document explaining that the copyright of the student theses is owned by the students. He also asked that the PMB provide the BPTC with a PDF copy of the student theses linked to the reel list.

### **Solomon Islands Development Trust**

On Tuesday 25 January I had a meeting with Jennifer Wate, the Executive Director of the Solomon Islands Development Trust. The Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) is a locally run non-government organization and has been operating since 1982 (29 years). It is the first locally run NGO in the Solomon Islands and as there were only a few local NGOs in the 1980s, they also have records from some of the other local NGOs. The SIDT is a dynamic and effective organization. AusAID is the core funder of the SIDT, through the Pacific Leadership program, however there are other means of revenue raising through staff at SIDT working as consultants such as with JICA on the gold mining project at Gold Ridge, east Guadalcanal, consultancy with the World Bank on gender assessment, and working with the SI Ministry of Agriculture working with farmers on Guadalcanal to better understand local farming methods.

The SIDT runs local awareness and education campaigns. They cover topics such as health, governance, elections and youth issues. They have a weekly radio program with a new theme each month, eg. Healthy communities is the monthly theme and youth and mental health was the weekly theme, and a drama group that travels to the provinces showcasing healthy living such as how to cook healthily using local produce.

The SIDT has a large archive staffed by two archivists (see picture below), initially funded, in 2009, by the AusAID community sector program. The archivists are now employed by SIDT to organize and list the SIDT archive. They have a large collection of minutes, a bi-monthly magazine *Link* (1987-) which has a print run of 1500, and many project files. They are organizing the archive using an A-Z subject file system.



\*\*The SIDT would like a simple guide book on how to organize and operate an archive. They are also interested in “sharing” an AVI volunteer with the SINA to develop the capacity and strength of the SIDT archive.

### **General comments**

January is wet season in the Solomon Islands and there were several torrential downpours of rain, usually after lunch, which were a relief after the hot and humid weather. Power was out at the SINA over lunchtime (12-2:30pm) on several of the days I was working. The creek at the back of the archives swelled to capacity a few times after massive downpours of rain.

I conducted all of my professional work in the Solomons using Bislama (Vanuatu pidgin). Solomon Islands pidgin is very similar to Bislama and Solomon Islanders understand it. There are some differences in the two languages which often brought laughter and teasing of “my style” of their language! Whilst I was in the Solomons I also picked up a few words of Solomon Islands pidgin. My favourite word was “stacka” which means “plenty” or a “great deal”. As I left an archive, people often said “Yu no worry, bae mi luk yu again, stacka work i stap long Solomons long PMB” which means “Don’t worry, I will see you again, there is plenty of work for the PMB in the Solomon Islands”!

### **Future work for PMB in Solomon Islands**



- 1) Continue to list and copy documents in the Anglican Church of Melanesia archive.
- 2) Continue to copy the student theses at Bp. Patteson Theological College (1979-2010).
- 3) Continue to list and microfilm the Solomon Islands YWCA Archive (1987-2009).
- 4) List and copy minutes and newsletters from local SI NGOs: Solomon Islands Development Trust, and Red Cross. Girl Guides and Scout Associations.
- 5) Possibly copying the Campbell family papers on Makira.
- 6) Papers and records of the Honiara Council of Women (1990-2006), Contact: Jocelyn Lai (c/o YWCA).
- 7) Jocelyn Lai has also collected women's stories and remembrances from the ethnic tension period for a book she is hoping to publish. She has stories and photographs which may be worth copying. Contact: Jocelyn Lai (c/o YWCA).
- 8) Dr. John Rohan has a strong personal collection of SIDT and early NGO material in the Solomon Islands. He was the founder of SIDT.
- 9) Monique Porras (owner of Lime Lounge café), is the daughter of Keithie Saunders and a family member who owns several businesses in the Solomons including the BJS Company. Keithie Saunders is a well known figure in Honiara whose family came after the war to start the Bahai faith and businesses in Honiara. Keithie is currently editing the biography of her parents.

#### **PMB and PARBICA related work**

- 1) Investigate funding opportunities for strengthening the SINA (AusAID Pacific Leadership program, RAMSI Accountability program).
- 2) List, promote suitable archive courses available to Pacific Archivist by distance in both Australia and New Zealand.
- 3) Conduct a workshop on reading room services, access and copyright policies at the PARBICA conference in August 2011.
- 4) Conduct a workshop on options for setting up preservation copying projects using digital equipment at the PARBICA conference in August 2011.

## **Thank you**

I would like to thank the following people for their support and assistance during my stay.

Bishop Terry Brown and the staff of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

Mrs. Julian Chonigolo, Mrs. Margaret Infirm, Mr. Benjamin Buka, Mr. Bernard Rizzu, Alice, Louisa and Mike of the Solomon Islands National Archives.

Ms. Alice Iwebu of the Solomon Islands YWCA.

Anthony (Principal) and Lilliana (his wife) at Bishop Patteson Theological College.

Dr. Matthew Jones at Bishop Patteson Theological College.

Tigu Tukumana (Librarian, Dip. Lib, UPNG) and Lucy Tasra (Assistant Librarian, currently studying Dip. Lib distance via USP) of the Charles Fox Memorial Library at Bishop Patteson Theological College.

Rev. James Tama (Deputy Principal) and Diana (his wife), both from Vanuatu, at Bishop Patteson Theological College.

Jennifer Wate, the Executive Director of the Solomon Islands Development Trust and Usenio Tadagao, archivist at SIDT.

Ms. Georgia Noy, my long-term friend who works for Save the Children, Solomon Islands and allowed me to stay in her home during my visit.

Mr. Chris Chevalier for kindly introduced me to Edna Sitai and assisted me with the Campbell family work.

Kylie Moloney  
PMB Archivist  
February 2011

Picture of birds decorating the SINA Conference room.

