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Trip Report

PMB Fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, 26 July – 10 August 2014



Kylie Moloney setting up the new PMB digital scanning equipment at the Catholic Bishops Conference, Gordons, PNG.

Summary

The main purpose of this trip was to:

- Survey, organize, list and begin copying the archives of the Catholic Bishops Conference in Gordons, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
- Deliver the off-line database of digitized land use reports and interactive map to the Department of Agriculture and Lifestock.

Background

On 26 April 2012, Ewan Maidment, as suggested by Archbishop Douglas Young, visited Fr Victor Roche, the General Secretary of the CBC, to survey the archives of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and the Solomon Islands, at Godwit Road, Gordons.

Ewan conducted a survey and Fr Roche confirmed that the CBC wished to work with the PMB to make preservation copies of its archives. Fr. Roche said that the CBC AGM minutes, c.1960 to the present, and the Pastoral Letters are its most precious records.

I spent the first half of 2014 developing the new PMB digital catalogue, testing with member libraries and acquiring and learning how to use new digital equipment. By 1 July 2014 I had acquired the new digital equipment and quickly learned how to use it. Fr. Victor Roche indicated that I could visit the CBC in Port Moresby in late July to undertake the archival work he had identified with Ewan in 2012.

As part of this field work trip to P.N.G. I delivered the off-line database and map, along with digitised land use reports and tracing maps, to the Department of Agriculture and Livestock. These digitised records were produced as part of the PNG Department of Agriculture and Livestock and PMB project funded by AusAID in 2012.

Travel and arrival

I left Canberra, which was 8C degrees (!), on Saturday 26 July and arrived in Brisbane where I stayed overnight with my friend, ethnomusicologist Dr. Kirsty Gillespie. Kirsty is currently working at the University of Queensland on the cultural heritage of the Lihir Gold Mine in P.N.G and on a study focusing on gender in mining. On Sunday 27 July I flew from Brisbane to Port Moresby.

The entire weight of my check-in luggage was 23kg and carry-on baggage was 10kg. My packing system for the new digital equipment worked well and I did not have to pay excess luggage, as in the past when carrying microfilm equipment.

Freddy, the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) driver, and Sr. Kumari met me at the airport. They kindly escorted me to the car and we stopped at the Boroko Foodworks supermarket where I stocked up on grocery supplies for the week ahead. We then drove to the CBC compound in the suburb of Gordons. There were many people hanging around outside the supermarket and on the streets, but I felt safe and secure accompanied by Sr. Kumari and Freddy who stayed close by at all times. Port Moresby has not had rain for more than 6 months and is very dry and dusty. The hills all around Moresby are bare. Fr. Victor Roche kindly arranged for me to have accommodation in a basic unit near the rear of the CBC campus. My house mate was 31 year old Serah Francis. She is an administrator at the CBC and was great company. My room was safe and secure with fly screen covered louvres. The unit had a very basic kitchen and lean-to cold shower bathroom with a concrete laundry tub, secured by wire fencing. There was quite a lot of wildlife in the unit, but I had a great time with Serah, self-catering and living simply. The unit was conveniently located only 10 metres away from the CBC archive where I worked every day.

Week 1 – Monday 28 July – Sunday 3 August

I attended morning devotion at 8am on Monday 28 July with the staff at CBC. At 8:30am I began work and surveyed the small archive room (2.5mx5m). The room was full of cardboard cartons stacked high, arch-lever folders, one desk covered in folders, boxes and papers and one compactus with a detailed index stuck to the outside. At the start, it was difficult to even enter the room to see what was inside. I made some progress in the morning, surveying the collection and discovered that

much of the material that was in the folders and boxes was old financial bank statements and invoice books dating from the early 1990s. I spoke with Fr. Victor Roche on Monday afternoon and he confirmed that he wanted me to clean up the archive and focus on listing and digitising the CBC Annual General Meeting reports and minutes.

Fr. Victor Roche said that he had spoken to Archbishop Douglas Young about the Bureau digitising the AGM materials and because the AGM reports and minutes are confidential, they wish to assign Restricted Access to these titles. The pastoral letters and press statements from the Annual General Meeting were public documents and are to be available for reference. Bougi Danaya, an administrative assistant was available to help me throughout the week. I talked with Fr. Victor Roche about the rules regarding the retention of financial records and he checked with Archbishop Douglas Young and the finance staff. Together we decided that all financial statements and invoice books prior to 2006 could be disposed of.

For the next four days I worked solidly and weeded out the financial records prior to 2006. The cleaners, Anna and Mary, along with the groundsmen Papa Jo and Willy helped me to dispose of these records using a wheel barrow and fire, at the back of the CBC campus. It was very dirty work and I am most appreciative of the help by the CBC cleaners and groundsmen. With many of the old financial papers gone, it was easier to survey and appraise the core of the collection. I found a series of old CBC papers in 17 boxes containing about 10 folders each that had a basic listing stuck to the outside of the boxes. These are the earliest records I could find in the CBC archive. At the same time



Archives in the Catholic Bishops Conference archive room.



Kylie sorting archives at the Catholic Bishops Conference.

as sorting and labelling boxes, I looked for papers relating to the CBC Annual General Meetings. I found some papers relating to the CBC AGM in different boxes and in various parts of the archive room. I sorted what I could find into date order and listed them. Most of the AGM papers dated from 1987-1999. I listed the files directly onto the laptop using the ICA-AtoM template in CSV format.

Bougi Danaya helped me to locate more recent CBC AGM papers (2000-) that were in Fr. Roche's office.

The old CBC boxes contain some AGM papers but they are not listed and each box will need to be searched one by one. Many of the reports of the AGM were missing and some of the minutes were missing. It was difficult to get a complete run of all the reports and minutes for the AGM meetings. Bougi Danaya kindly sat with me one morning and explained the structure of the CBC, including the Archbishops, the Bishops, Committees, including the Central Committee and the Finance Board and the various Commissions. The Central Committee follows up on the resolutions and agreements made by the Bishops at each AGM. In 1966 the CBC started with 16 Bishops. Today, in 2014, the

CBC has 23 bishops working throughout Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Fr. Victor Roche told me that today, 30% of the Papua New Guinea population is Catholic (28 Jul 2014).



Kylie and Fr. Victor Roche at the Catholic Bishops Conference.

On the fifth day of working at the CBC, Friday 1 August, I set up the digital camera and laptop on the desk in the small archive room. There were three small louvre windows up high in the archive room that I covered with a sarong so as not to let in bright daylight whilst I was copying. The room was quite hot to work in, but staff in the Catholic Education office, to the side of the archive room, kindly kept their fan on high so I was comfortable. I began copying the CBC AGM minutes, reports and additional papers from 1975, 1987- 2014, using the new PMB digital equipment. The additional papers included

draft reports, correspondence, financial statements and draft pastoral letters and press releases. The digital equipment and laptop worked well. The capturing was clear and, due to limited time, I focussed on capturing the files digitally in .raw format. I decided to undertake the post-processing of converting the raw files to .jpgs and merging them into PDFs when I return to Canberra.

The archive room was to the side of the National Christian Education Coordinator's office, Sr Mary Mc.Carthy PBVM. Sr. Mary and her staff were good company and I enjoyed sharing the space with them. Sr. Mary is interested in undertaking research on the history of the Catholic Education in PNG, including the role Catholic education has played in the development of PNG. She said many of the early educators are elderly and it would be timely to interview them and undertake a study on this subject. I said that I would look into possible universities or courses that would offer funding for such a study.

Several staff members at CBC are complaining of ailments relating to RSI and over-use syndromes connected with computer and desk work. I promised to send them some basic stretches that can be done at their desks when I return.

Prior to Fr. Victor Roche departing for leave to India on Saturday, I spoke to him about the possibility of creating a position for a CBC staff member to administer and care for the CBC archives. Fr. Roche values the work of archivists and understands that there is more to be done with the CBC archive. Fr. Roche said he was eager to create a new position or have a volunteer working on the CBC archives 1-2 days a fortnight. I said that I would be happy to deliver training to the new CBC archivist when I return in 2015.

On Saturday 2 August I spent the day with Mrs. Tukul Kaiku and Vicky Puipui. Mrs. Kaiku is a lecturer in records management at the University of Papua New Guinea. Vicky Puipui is the Acting Chief Archivist of the National Archives. Mrs. Kaiku's family and Vicky prepared a beautiful mumu lunch for me (chicken soup, roast chicken pieces and green vegetables cooked in the ground, local bananas and kaukau). Whilst it was being prepared Mrs. Kaiku and a few members of her family took me to the Port Moresby Nature Park; an oasis of green lush rainforest and open park land with some animals and a large walk-through aviary. I saw two female birds of paradise, a cuscus, a tree kangaroo, crocodiles and lots of birds including a hornbill, several cassowaries and numerous brightly coloured parrots. Mrs. Kaiku talked with me about the state of archive education in PNG. She said that many students enrol in her records management classes, sometimes between 90 and

100 each semester! There are very few jobs for these graduates, although some of the exceptional students have found work as document control staff on projects with companies who are operating the extensive Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) project and other mining projects in PNG. Mrs. Kaiku and Vicky were both interested to learn more about new PMB developments and the role of digital record keeping in archives.



Mrs. Kaiku, one of her grandchildren, Kylie and Vicky Puipui at Mrs. Kaiku's home.

On Sunday 3 August I worked solidly and continued to copy the CBC AGM reports and papers. At the end of each day of digitising, I spent about 30 minutes backing up the digitised files onto the external hard drive which I stored separately to the archive, in the small apartment where I was staying.

Week 2 – Monday 4 – Sunday 10 August

On Monday 4 August I attended the CBC morning devotion with Archbishop John Ribat. Archbishop Ribat was very welcoming and expressed his gratitude for me being there and the PMB assisting to preserve the CBC archives. I undertook some administration and made several phone calls, using my Digicel phone card, to arrange external meetings with UPNG and other Government departments for the coming week. I did not have internet access at the CBC, however Serah Francis kindly allowed me to log on to her computer before work started (7-8am) a couple of days so I could check and respond to any urgent emails.

At lunch time on Monday, Mr. Chris Dekuku, from the PNG Department of Agriculture and Livestock kindly picked me up from the CBC compound in Gordons and drove me to the DAL offices at Monian Tower, down-town Port Moresby. I met the DAL staff who have been working on the digitisation of the Land Use Reports and demonstrated to them how the off-line database and map of the digitised land use reports works. The off-line database and map were created at the ANU using Ubuntu, an open-source operating system. The Ubuntu system has limited accessibility. It does not work on all PCs and the database and system can not be transferred from PC to PC. With this in mind, prior to departing for PNG I asked software developer, Mark Triggs, to assist me in developing a more user-friendly version of the PNG DAL digitised land use reports using an index.html file which linked to the associated PDFs of the Land Use Reports. I took both systems to PNG on external hard drives and on Monday, demonstrated to the DAL staff how both systems worked. Although the DAL staff liked the interactive map, they agreed that it had limited use and preferred the index.html version with the linked PDFs. DAL staff took both of the external hard drives and began to copy the easier, more accessible, .html version to their individual PCs.

During the visit to DAL, the staff told me that the laptop they use to digitise DAL documents had recently run out of virus protection and the lead from the digital camera to the laptop had broken. I managed to partly install new virus protection software on the laptop and said that I would arrange for a new camera lead to be sent to them when I returned to Australia. I discussed the program for the launch of the DAL digitised Land Use Reports scheduled for Wednesday 6 August at the Ela Beach Hotel with DAL staff and Chris Dekuku. The DAL staff borrowed my digital camera and took photographs of their digitisation equipment which they later used in a powerpoint presentation at the launch of the digitised reports. Chris Dekuku and I worked on the wording for the agreement between the DAL and the PMB which included ownership of the IP of the original and digitised Land

Use Reports, database and maps resting with the PNG DAL as well as the DAL granting the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau permission to distribute copies of the digitised land use reports to PMB member libraries. After we drafted the agreement, Chris Dekuku drove me back to the CBC in Gordons.



Mr. Leo Eko, Digitisation Officer at DAL demonstrating how the digitisation equipment is set up for digitising records at DAL.

On Monday afternoon I delivered a 30 minute presentation on archives for the staff of the CBC. I explained what archives are, why they are important, who uses them and talked about the work of an archivist. I explained in detail the work I had been undertaking at the CBC archives. About 15 CBC staff attended my presentation and asked questions about the training of a CBC staff member in archives as well as how to deal with e-records.

On Tuesday I continued to digitise the CBC AGM minutes and reports. I spoke with Fr. David Willis at CIT Bomana Theological College about the possibility of copying

student theses. I also prepared a speech for the launch of the digitised land use reports for the following day.

The digitised Land Use Reports were launched by the Secretary, Mr. Ila'ava of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock at the Ela Beach Hotel on the morning of Wednesday 6 August. Mr. Francis Daink, Deputy Secretary of Policy, was the Master of Ceremony and opened proceedings. There was an opening song and prayer by Jackson Kaumana and DAL digitisation staff. The DAL Secretary gave



Mr. Jackson Kaumana and the DAL staff singing at the launch of the digitised Land Use Reports.

a welcome address and spoke of the need for PNG to modernise and up-scale their Agriculture sector and make it more competitive. He congratulated the DAL team for their hard work in digitising the land use reports and said it would be an important tool, not only in the public service but for other sectors, such as private investors. The Coordinator of the project, Chris Dekuku delivered a speech about the history of the project and the work of his team. I presented a speech (attached) covering the importance of

preserving and making these important records accessible and congratulated

the DAL staff on their work. I officially handed over the off-line database and interactive map to the secretary, Mr. Ila'ava and signed the agreement between the DAL and the PMB.

I was also involved in the official handing over of the original land use reports to the PNG National Archives, as Ms Vicky Puipui, the Acting National Archivist was not present because she was launching National Book Week in Buka, Bougainville. Mr. Daink closed proceedings and said that a

future digitisation project at the DAL should be the PNG rainfall data held by the DAL. There were several journalists present and the launch was later covered by the two main PNG national newspapers and EMTV (articles attached). The EMTV news clip can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QOTaCmtXDc&list=UUuY44m-cD124oiTaNkBtsLA>

A lovely lunch followed the launch at the Ela Beach Hotel where I met many DAL staff and other invited guests, including Ms. Semmy Ojuka, the University Librarian at the University of Papua New Guinea. As a result of this chance meeting, Ms. Ojuka asked me to visit UPNG on Friday and deliver a short presentation to her staff on the new digital version of the PMB catalogue and the digitisation work I had been undertaking at the CBC.



Kylie handing over the external hard drives containing the database and digitised land use reports to Mr. Ila'ava, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock.

On Thursday morning I continued work digitising the CBC AGM minutes and reports. Prior to my departure, Anthony Regan (A.N.U.) spoke to me about the Bougainville Land Title files that have been digitised by the PNG Department of Land Title Commission. The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau involvement in the PNG Land Title Commission digitisation project dates back to 2007 when Ewan Maidment was invited by the PNG-Australia Law and Justice Sector Program to survey the Land Titles Commission and National Lands Commission records in Port Moresby. In 2010 AusAID funded a project, co-ordinated by the PMB and the Lands Titles Commission, to list and digitise the land commissions records, as well as permanently store the original records. The project funding ceased in 2013. At the request of the current Secretary, Mr. Benedict Batata, I visited the offices of the Land Titles Commission to review the project and investigate further options or ways forward to complete the project.



Mrs. Agi Ila, the LTC registrar holding an example of an annotated land survey map at the Lands Titles Commission office.

I was told that approximately 70% of the Land Title files held at the PNG Land Titles Commission offices have been digitised. Less than 10% of the Land Title files have been entered into the Access database and the index cards have not yet been digitised. After the project funding ceased in 2013, only one staff member has been retained to to continue the digitisation of the land title files. The small hard drive of the stand-alone PC where the clerk is working is full and the files are being transferred by the clerk to the external hard drive, that is stored in the same room as the PC that was supplied as part of the project in 2011. There is only one copy of the digitised land title

files, on the external hard drive, with no back up. This is of great concern as external hard drives,

particularly in hot humid climates, do not last for ever. On hearing this news, I retrieved a 1TB external hard drive from my room at the CBC in Gordons and asked the Land Titles Commission driver to deliver it to the PNG Land Titles Commission office. I encouraged the clerk to regularly back up the digitised files onto the new 1TB external hard drive I supplied and store it in a safe place, outside of the room where Land Title Commission office. As yet, there is no access to the digitised land title records by any of the Land Titles Commission staff. The IT branch of the Land Titles Commission are not assisting with back-ups or IT infrastructure.



An example of an large scale annotated land survey map at the Lands Titles Commission office.

Issues surrounding land are highly political and problematic in PNG. I believe that the completion of the digitisation of the Land Titles records is urgent. If the land titles records of PNG were lost, it would be a tragedy. The most urgent tasks are :

- 1) the strengthening of networked secure IT infrastructure, including backups and secure access for key Land Titles staff;
- 2) the listing and entering of data into the Access database,
- 3) the digitisation of the remaining Land Titles records,
- 4) the digitisation of the land survey maps.

I promised Benedict Batata that I would investigate the possibility of the Bureau assisting the PNG Land Titles Commission to source funding to complete the digitised land title project.

On Friday 8 August Ms. Semmy Ojuka, the University of Papua New Guinea librarian, kindly picked me up from the CBC compound in Gordons and drove me to the UPNG. I visited the Michael Somare library and had a brief meeting with Semmy in her office about the possibility of the University of PNG becoming a member library of the PMB. Ms. Ojuka explained to me that the UPNG library is in the middle of their e-library project and the UPNG library now has broadband internet connection. The UPNG library catalogue is now online and they are currently trialling a couple of electronic databases, including Ebsco. Ms. Ojuka said there were over 5000 students enrolled at UPNG. I was very impressed with the



The Michel Somare Library at the University of Papua New Guinea

UPNG library facilities. There was banks of networked PCs for student access and laboratories of new PCs that were dedicated to student learning. I witnessed many students using their own laptops in the library. Around 15 senior University of Papua New Guinea librarians attended my presentation. They were very keen to hear about the new digital PMB catalogue and my demonstration of the new catalogue worked well. The internet connection at UPNG library was very fast and I was able to demonstrate how the digitised photographs and PDFs of archives could be accessed using the new PMB digital catalogue. I also gave a brief summary about the digitisation work I had been undertaking at the CBC the last two weeks. The librarians were very excited by the possibility of accessing the PMB materials online. They said that in the past, the UPNG library had purchased some PMB microfilm, but it has since been damaged by the tropical climate and can not be used.



Ms. Josepha Kapa and another staff member from the UPNG special collections took me on a brief tour. They showed me the good work they have been doing in organising, listing and labelling this important archive as a result of Karina Taylor’s brief training program for them in 2009. They asked many questions about the equipment I am using to digitise archives and were hopeful that the University of PNG Library could become a member of the PMB. They said many students and staff at UPNG would benefit from having access to the PMB titles. They asked if they were members, could they influence the digitisation of retrospective PMB titles that specifically related to PNG or the topics/subjects that their students were interested in. I said this could be a possibility. Ms. Ojuka indicated that she was keen to trial the new PMB digital database at the University of Papua New Guinea library. I said that I would arrange a free trial of the new PMB digital database for the UPNG Library on my return to Australia.

Ms. Josepha Kapa showing the archives in the New Guinea Collection at the University of Papua New Guinea Library.

On Friday afternoon I visited Maisy Taouwani, the librarian at the Institute of National Affairs. The INA library is a small, specialist library with limited resources. The INA Library has a very old version of the Softlink catalogue and Maisy is using a very old computer that does not have access to the Internet. Maisy works as the Librarian, but also helps with the Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee and Transparency International. The INA library includes books, CDs, newspapers, Government reports and policies as well as publications produced by the INA. The collection has been acquired by donation. There is no money for new acquisitions. Researchers and students are the main customers of the INA library. The INA Library is located next to a conference room and



Students working in the reading room of the New Guinea Collection at the University of Papua New Guinea Library.

sometimes the concertener doors are opened up when there is a conference. Many people walk through the INA Library, especially when a conference takes place after hours or on the weekend and Maisy reported that numerous items have been removed from the INA Library shelves. There is some overlap between the INA Library and NRI Library collections. The NRI Library also uses Softlink. I said to Maisy that I would encourage her boss to purchase a new upgraded computer with Internet access and upgrade the Softlink catalogue to the latest version. Maisy said that she would contact the NRI Librarian to see if they could share records between the two institutions.

Thank you

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

Father Victor Roche, CBC General Secretary

Sister Kumari, Catholic Bishops Conference

Sister Mary McCarthy, pbvm, Catholic Education Office, CBC

Archbishop John Ribat, Port Moresby Catholic Arch-diocese and spokesman for the Catholic Bishops in PNG.

Staff of the CBC, especially Serah Francis my house mate at CBC for two weeks and Bougi Danaya, administration officer who assisted me with the archives, and Anna and Mary, the CBC cleaners.

Dr. Chris Dekuku and the staff of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock, PNG.

Mrs. Tukul Kaiku, Lecturer in Records Management, University of Papua New Guinea.

Mrs. Vicky Puipui, Acting Chief Archivist, PNG National Archives.

Ms. Semmy Ojuka, Chief Librarian at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Ms. Josepha Kapa, Archivist in the New Guinea Collection at the University of Papua New Guinea Library.

Mr. Benedict Batata, Secretary of the PNG Land Titles Commission.

Mrs. Aga Ila and Ms. Gela at the Land Titles Commission office.

Mrs. Maisy Taouwani, the librarian at the Institute of National Affairs.



Sera Francis, Sr. Kumari and Kylie at Sr.Kumari's home, Catholic Bishops Conference.