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PMB Management Committee meeting, Hilo, 9 July 1996

The Pacific History Association Conference in Hilo, Hawai‘i, gave a unique opportunity for the representatives of the PMB member organisations to meet and work together. The PMB meeting was one very valuable aspect of it. The meeting endorsed the current activities and immediate future programs of the Bureau. It was agreed that the Pambu Solomon Islands projects be extended into 1997, aiming at a field trip to Honiara in February/March 1997, and that the Vanuatu projects be deferred until till later in 1997 and early 1998.

The Committee agreed to increase the price for overseas sales of microfilm to AU$70/reel; to investigate options for a second camera, possibly a digital camera, but to hold off consideration of digitisation of PMB products for the time being; and to develop and circulate drafts of a revised constitution and operating instructions. The Committee rejected a proposal to grant the University of the South Pacific Library half-rate membership of the PMB consortium in exchange for the right for the PMB to distribute any manuscript titles that the USP Library’s Micrographics Unit produces.

The issue of PMB microfilming records in institutional custody was discussed at length. Brij Lal noted that the Bureau had now expanded the definition of “at risk” records to include contemporary records in the islands. As well as records of NGOs, trade unions, records relating to the crisis in Bougainville and to the coups in Fiji, Dr Lal expressed a strong desire to have access to records of companies operating in the Pacific. Karen Peacock affirmed the University of Hawai‘i Library’s interest in access to contemporary material, including documents of, for example, companies such as CSR and Burns Philp, where the original records are in good archival custody but geographically remote from researchers. Stephen Innes proposed that the PMB microfilm the Elizabeth Bott-Spillius papers on Tongan history and tradition held at the University of Auckland Library.
Diane Woods, however, emphasized that the National Library of NZ wished the Bureau to concentrate its efforts on "at risk" records. In support of that position Margaret Phillips added that the National Library of Australia was definitely opposed to the PMB undertaking microfilming projects aimed at secure records in archival custody, even if there is overseas researcher demand for access. Kathy Creely, of the Melanesian Area Research Center, University of California, suggested that the answer may be to form a separate consortium, under the management of the PMB, to undertake such projects.

Over and above the question of microfilming archives in institutional custody a number of specific projects were suggested. Karen Peacock pointed out that the PMB was doing little work in Micronesia and referred to the existence of a complete set of Palau constitutional conference records; she also has papers of a FSM constitutional conference, 1990, available for microfilming at the University of Hawaii. Kathy Creely noted that the Melanesian Area Research Center has PNG constitutional material. Stephen Innes relayed comments on PMB programs from faculty members at the University of Auckland, including strong representations to have Western Pacific High Commission and British Solomon Islands Protectorate materials filmed.

**Microfilming of Pacific Records in the Public Record Office**

In 1994 the ANU Library began ordering new filming of Pacific islands records in the Public Record Office (U.K.). To date three file series have been filmed, and the films are available for research at the ANU Library. All the series filmed are of Colonial Office files.

Records in various PRO series, particularly Colonial Office files, had been earlier filmed as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project. Further material of interest had been identified by a Pacific Manuscripts Bureau commissioned survey of unfilmed Pacific records in the PRO.

In the absence of plans elsewhere to continue filming Pacific records at the PRO, and in light of the demand by ANU Pacific historians for access to the material, the ANU Library decided in 1994 to begin using part of its annual Pacific collections budget for the filming of records held at the PRO. Because of the PMB survey we had some idea of the series of interest and their size.

The first series filmed (CO 83 245/1-261/4) was a continuation of the CO 83 series on Fiji begun by the AJCP project. Files (or 'pieces' in PRO parlance) in this series cover the period 1947-1951. Files are arranged by topic and date. Included in these Fiji files are files covering reports on constitutional reform, development planning and economic projects, revenue and expenditure, as well as reports of various Departments and concerning various ordinances. The filmed series consists of 10 reels of microfilm.

The next series filmed was CO 1023 which consists of original correspondence of the Hong Kong and Pacific Department for the period 1952-1954. For this series the Pacific islands files only were filmed. (This series follows the series earlier filmed under AJCP: CO 225/124-375, Colonial Office, Western Pacific, original correspondence, 1914-51.) The series covers the British Pacific: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, New Hebrides, Tonga, Pitcairn, plus a number of files on the South Pacific Commission (SPC). The filmed series consists of 12 reels of film.

The CO 1023 series is followed by CO 1036, also Colonial Office, Hong Kong and Pacific Department files, covering the period 1954-1959. Again only the Pacific islands files were filmed, and islands covered are as above. There is again a series of files on the SPC. Topics cover just about everything concerned with government administration and development. Of note are files concerned with constitutional development and the establishment of local government and legislation. This file series consists of 17 reels.
An index to PRO files exists in the form of the Kew lists; however this only goes down to the file heading level. Within series some files are permanently closed and some closed for 50 years; these were not available for filming.

Duplicate copies of these microfilms are only available from the Public Record Office. For enquiries about PRO microfilms contact the Reprographic Ordering Section, Public Record Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU, fax: (181) 878-8905.

In response to a request for the filming of PRO records, the PRO's Reprographic Unit provides an estimate of cost and prepayment must be made for this amount. A starting date for the commencement of filming is provided and depends on demand at the PRO. We found that our films arrived around 4-6 months after our order was sent. (Note: this is for new filming, duplicate films are provided more quickly.)

For anyone contemplating filming by the PRO I should note that their pricing structure changed in April of this year. Previously orders were priced per exposure, but pricing is now on an hourly charge for all processes to enable the PRO to recover its costs. This has led to quite an increase in charges for new microfilming.

Maureen Kattau  
The Australian National University Library

Methodist Church of New Zealand, Connexional Archives, Auckland, 1996

The Archivist, Mrs Verna Mossing, kindly allowed the PMB to use the Archives as a base for filming Methodist Mission material relating to the Solomon Islands during the weekend 15-16 June and again for a week, 30 Sep-5 Oct. Mrs Nancy Carter put in an enormous effort guiding the selection of material for filming and brought in the diaries of Sister Effie Harkness which she had on loan. We filmed excerpts from the Harkness diaries relating to her service with the Methodist Overseas Mission in the Solomon Islands, 1941-1957. However W & F Pascoe Pty Ltd subsequently reported that one reel of this material had failed due to a loading fault and will have to be re-filmed. Mrs Mossong also made available for filming Methodist Overseas Mission, Foreign Mission Executive minute books, 1925-1931, Mission Board minutes, 1955-1972, the correspondence of the Solomon Islands Mission Chairman with the General Secretary of the Mission, 1952-1961, all of which continue series copied by Robert Langdon. Diaries of various people associated with the Mission were also filmed, including a number of women and Solomon Islanders, such as Ada Lee, Job Tozaka, Daniel Ringi, David Voeta, Merle Farland, Merle Carter, Ishmael Ngatu and A A Bensley: a total of 19 reels of microfilm were made. (See 1996 production list below for PMB titles.)

St John's College Library, Auckland

The Librarian, Mrs Judith Bright, had received permission from the Melanesian Trust Board and the Church of Melanesia for the Bureau to microfilm the Melanesian Mission Executive minutes, 1921-1925, and the Melanesian Mission Finance Board minutes, 1925-1934. In June Mrs Bright kindly delivered the minute books to the Methodist Connexional Archives where they were microfilmed. The minute books are to be transferred to the Church of Melanesia in Honiara following microfilming. They complement a letter book of the Finance Committee of the Melanesian Mission already filmed by the Bureau at PMB 554. The PMB title for the microfilm is as follows:

(Available for reference.)
Union Steam Ship Company Archives

Otago University in Dunedin is very rich in Pacific scholars and resources for Pacific scholarship. It is perhaps not known as widely as it might be that the Hocken Archives, Otago University, holds records of the Union Steam Ship Co which are probably the most comprehensive of any of the Australasian shipping firms that have operated in the Pacific. The USS Co archives are at least on a par with those of Burns Philp & Co. For example, on a very brief inspection, the Fiji branch correspondence with head office in Dunedin, 1884-1916, includes documentation of a strike by a Fijian crew on the USS Co’s Tona in October 1885, probably the first ever strike in Fiji. There is also correspondence on the establishment of a USS Co line through Tonga in 1885. The negotiations involved Rev Shirley Baker and J B Thurston and the correspondence comments in detail on the dispute between Shirley Baker and Dr J E Moulton (AG292 5/1/2).

Lists of the USS Co archives can be obtained from the Hocken Library Manuscripts Section, 137-151 Leith Street, Dunedin; (email: archives.hocken@librius.otago.ac.nz). Please note that for historical reasons the USS Co collection was split and the staff records of the Company as well as its more recent administrative records (since c.1920s) are held by the Wellington Maritime Museum, Queens Wharf, Jervois Quay, Wellington; (email: maritime@extra.co.nz).

Archives of W R Carpenter & Co Ltd, Tulagi Branch, in Dunedin

When war came to the British Solomon Islands Protectorate in early 1942, the "commercials", as businesses were called, left Tulagi, the pre-war capital, to local looters and the invading Japanese. In the turmoil, records, including some government ones, were lost or destroyed. The first small group of civilians to return to the Solomons after the war had various commissions from business interests and individuals. The shipping and trading company, W. R. Carpenter, asked Tom Elkington, labour recruiter and son of the former owners of Elkington’s Hotel in Tulagi, to look for their safe in Tulagi and gave him the key. Tom found the safe, sent back to Sydney the material Carpenter wanted and threw to one side old documents that were to be burned. They never did get burned; they provided a few laughs for Tom who knew all the characters mentioned in the letters and branch reports. Over the years he all but forgot the papers, in a box stowed away. Then a historian, Judy Bennett, turned up at Tulagi in the mid 1970s to talk with Tom. He allowed her to read the papers and she used them in her Wealth of the Solomons: a history of a Pacific Archipelago, 1800-1978. A few years later, Tom Elkington with his humour and his vast store of knowledge of the colonial Solomons died in Brisbane. Fittingly, his ashes were later scattered at Tulagi by his widow, Naysa. She gave the Carpenter papers to Judy Bennett. With the permission of Devereau Holdings, the successors of W R Carpenter & Co Ltd, Dr Bennett kindly allowed the Bureau to film the Tulagi Branch archives; the PMB title is as follows:

PMB 1112 W R Carpenter & Co Ltd, Tulagi Branch: Branch Manager’s correspondence and related papers, 1925-1932. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

Thanks to Dr Judy Bennett, History Department, Otago University, for the substance of this report.

Solomon Islands Newspapers in Dunedin

Dr Ian Frazer, of the Anthropology Department at Otago University in Dunedin, probably has the strongest collection of Solomon Island newspapers outside of the Solomons. The newspapers are ideal for microfilming as they are not bound and have been stored flat in very good conditions. During a brief visit in October we filmed The Kakamora Reporter (George Aitkin) and the Solomons News Drum (Government Information Service, Office of the Prime Minister) which together cover the period 1970-1982, and some other minor publications of George Aitkin’s. There are a few issues missing in Ian Frazer’s runs of the two main titles, but the plan is to film the gaps from other sources, if possible, and splice them into the final microfilm. The PMB titles are:

Newspapers identified for the next stage of filming are the *Solomons Tok Tok*, 1977-1992 (George Aitkin, ed.) and the *Solomon Star*, 1982+ (John Lamanu, ed.), both weeklies. The plan is to have fairly complete microfilm copies of metropolitan SI newspapers till at least 1992, when the *Solomons Voice* starts. Permission to distribute the microfilms is being sought from the publishers. Dr Frazer has a long term plan to index at least some of these newspapers.

Dr Frazer was willing to make his extensive collection of Solomon Islands political manifestoes available to the PMB for microfilming, but unfortunately there was not time to make the films during this trip. Dr Frazer also said that he could make available for filming his own Solomon Islands photographs and some of his anthropological notes which include genealogical material on Pitcairn Island.

**Archives of the Archdiocese of Papeete Microfilming Project, Stage II**

Pambu spent three weeks in Papeete, 16 June-6 July, completing the microfilming of the administrative records described in Père Amerigo Cools' first *récertoire* of the archives of the Archdiocese (1970). The first part of this record group had been filmed by the Bureau in June-July 1995. This second part consisted of 7 filing cabinet drawers of documents which are a continuation of the total record group held in three 4-drawer filing cabinets. The documents were filmed on 31 reels, making a total of 60 reels for the whole record group of administrative archives, plus eight reels of manuscript and documentary material.

The records are arranged in the following categories:

- **A.**  Autorités supérieures
- **B.**  Archidiocèse de Papeete
- **C/D.**  Personnel missionnaire
- **E.**  Enseignement
- **F.**  Culte, sacrements, liturgie
- **G.**  Apostolat, oeuvres, communications sociales, etc.
- **H.**  Rapports - autorités civiles
- **I.**  Rapports - Congrégations des Sacrés-Cœurs (ss.cc.)
- **J.**  Rapports - laïcs
- **K.**  Rapports - autres religions
- **L.**  Administration temporel
- **MS.**  Manuscrits
- **N.**  Aide
- **P.**  Géographie, histoire, &c
- **Z.**  Histoire de la Mission

Sections D-Z were filmed on this trip, with the exception of the manuscripts at section MS which had already been filmed. The plans and deeds of Mission lands listed at L212, and held separately in a cupboard, were not filmed, though an uncatalogued summary listing of Mission estates was filmed. Maps at P151 were not filmed either as they were too large for the camera to copy efficiently. A summary reel list of PMB1080/reels 29-60 is available from the Bureau.

Mgr. Coppenrath was very keen to have a batch of Mangarevan manuscripts filmed, but there was not time to do so. Dr Karl Rensch (author of *Tikionario Mangareva* - Avani Dictionnaire Mangarevien-Francais, Canberra, 1991) commented that he considered it quite important to copy the manuscripts as there are very few Mangarevan texts in existence. This material should be filmed on a future occasion.
when the opportunity occurs. The Mangarevian manuscripts are in approximately 50 folders stored on two shelves of a cupboard in the repository at the Évêché. There appear to be quite a few duplicates amongst them. A rough list of the Mangarevian manuscripts follows:

2 x meditations
2 x prayers
4 x catechism (in French & Mangarevian)
1 x dictionnaire, A-K
7 x Histoire des hebrews - introduction
12 x Histoire sainte (short); Vies des Saints
2 x Ecriture St Marc - Evangile
3 x Ecriture St Luc: Chs.1-24, 53; Chs. 1-2, & 23
3 x Ecriture St Matthieu: Chs.1-28, 20; & Chs.1-8,10
1 x Evangile dans différents fêtes liturgiques
12 x Lives of Saints and Martyrs

Tongan History Association Conference, Canberra, 28-31 January

A panel discussion of archival arrangements in Tonga, “Preserving the Past: the archival question”, has been scheduled for the last day of the THA Conference, 31 January 1997. The Hon. Tu‘ivanuavou Vaea, Secretary of the Tonga Traditions Committee, has been invited to join the panel. The other panelists will be Dr Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, the well-known Tongan historian from the University of Melbourne, Dr Peter Orlovich of the University of NSW, who has been involved in archival training in the Pacific over many years, and the PMB Executive Officer, Ewan Maidment. The THA panel session will address issues of preservation, control and access arising from current archival arrangements for Tongan government records and for research records relating to Tonga.

There is no archives directorate in the Kingdom of Tonga with responsibility for all of the archives of the Kingdom. Most ministries still retain their own records, including the Prime Minister’s Department, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Lands, Justice Department and Supreme Court of Tonga, and adopt their own rules governing access to and use of their records. Tongan Government records, including Prime Minister’s Department records, are also held at the Tumbull Library in Wellington (712 boxes) and in the La Trobe Library in Melbourne. Palace Office records, which are under the direct control of the Deputy Private Secretary to His Majesty, consist of the Palace archives, the library and records gathered by the Tonga Traditions Committee which was established in the 1950s. The earliest of the Palace records are from 1853, but holdings are incomplete because of some destruction of records in the late 1930s. The Palace Office records include minutes of the legislature from the 1930s; minutes of Privy Council, 1878, 1879, 1903-1912, 1930s++; complete correspondence and diaries of King Tupou II and Queen Salote, 1900++; the King’s letterbooks-out, 1898-1900, 1902-1905; Commissions and Oaths of Allegiance, 1899-1967; Privy council appeal case files; genealogies; photograph albums and complete sets of the Tongan Government Gazette from 1880 and of the Chronicle (Tongan and English) to the 1980s. (See Ami Latu, “A Brief Know What From Tonga”, Pacific Archives Journal, No.7, Apr 1989, pp.5-6; and Peter Orlovich, “Archival Training in the Pacific Region”, Archives in the Tropics: proceedings of the Australian Society of Archives Conference, Townsville, 1994, p.24.)

Pambu Operations in Australia

Letterbooks of the Tonga Premier, Shirley Baker, 1884-1890, held in the La Trobe Library were microfilmed in August. These are a companion series to the letterbooks filmed by the Bureau in the Justice Archives in Nuku‘alofa last year. Microfilming of the archives of the Fiji Independent News Service is continuing in Canberra. Submissions to the Fiji Constitution Review Commission have been made available to the Bureau for filming by Dr Brij Lal. The Bureau has also been given access to correspondence of T N Simpson, a Methodist missionary who was killed in PNG during the war, to the papers of Bert Speer, a Medical Assistant in PNG after the war, and to a comprehensive report on the New Hebrides, Étude sur les sociétés aux Nouvelle Hébrides, dated 1930, by Corbin de Mangoux, Head of the Banque de Indochine. Negotiations are under way for filming several record groups relating to the crisis in Bougainville. Preparations are being made for a major microfilming expedition to Port Moresby and Honiara early in the new year.
PMB Production in 1996

Approximately 130 reels have been made so far this year. The precise number cannot be given at this stage as the cutting of the Solomon Islands microfilms made in NZ during October is not yet complete. Not all of this material will be ready for distribution to members this year. In particular, the Solomon Island newspapers may be held over while we locate and film issues to fill the few gaps in the run. The Bureau plans to film submissions to the Fiji Constitution Review Commission before the end of the year, as we believe there is currently a strong interest in this material.

PMB 1086 MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, TONGA: Tongatapu Registry: marriage certificates, 1892-1899, 1903-1909. 3 reels. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1087 LOCKLEY, Rev Dr G. Lindsay: transcripts and research files relating to the London Missionary Society and Congregationalism in the Pacific and Australia. Reels 1-3. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1089 GOVERNMENT OF TONGA: Premier’s (Shirley Baker’s) letterbooks-out, 1873-1874 & 1880-1890. 2 reels. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1090 SYMONS, Craig: Patrol and native local government survey reports, Western Highlands, PNG, 1960-1961. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1091 ZEITLER, Adolphus: business and family papers re activities in the New Hebrides, 1899-1935. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1092 MELANESIAN MISSION: Executive Committee minutes, 21 Apr 1921- 5 Mar 1925, and Finance Board minutes, 25 Mar 1925-31 Jul 1934. 2 reels. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1093 METHODIST CHURCH IN FIJI: Circuit reports, 1835-1898, and the Swanson Collection on the Ra and Ba military campaigns, 1873. 5 reels. (Restricted access.)
PMB 1094 COUNCIL OF PACIFIC TEACHERS ORGANISATIONS: minutes of annual meetings, reports and Women’s Network files, 1984-1994. 2 reels. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1095 MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, TONGA, TONGATAPU REGISTRY: births and deaths registers, 1867-1973 (gaps - mainly 19th century registers). 2 reels. (Restricted access.)
PMB 1096 HARKNESS, Sister Elfie: excerpts from her diaries relating to her service with the Methodist Overseas Mission in the Solomon Islands, 15 Jul 1941-7 May 1957. Reels 1 & 3. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1097 METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND, METHODIST OVERSEAS MISSION: Foreign Mission Executive minute books, 8 Jan 1925-15 Dec 1931. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1099 LUXTON, Rev. Clarence T J: diaries, correspondence and related papers, 1945-47. Part of 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1100 ALELE, Joseph: diaries (English translation from Roviana original), Oct 1940- Mar 1943. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1101 BENSLEY, Rev. A A: diary (original and typescript), May 1926-Dec 1934. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1103 RINGI, Daniel: diaries (photocopy of Roviana original and English translation), 1951-1956 (irreg.). 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1104 VOETA, David: diary (Roviana original and English translation), May 1935-Jan 1936. Part of 1 reel. (Available for reference.)
PMB 1105 KEVISI, John (?): diary (photocopy of Roviana original), Jan-Apr 1937. Part of 1 reel. (Available for reference.)


PMB 1107 CARTER, Sister Merle: diaries (originals and typescripts) and correspondence, 1946-1950. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1108 BINET, Rev. Vincent: correspondence with the government, 1926-1931 and with Dr Clifford James on clothes, 1931. Part of 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1109 NGATU, Ishmael: diaries (English translations and some originals), 1927-1954. Reels 1-3. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1110 METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND, OVERSEAS MISSION BOARD: minutes, Dec 1955-Nov 1972. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1111 METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND, Methodist Overseas Mission, Solomon Islands Mission, Chairman’s correspondence (indexed), 1952-1961. 7 reels. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1112 W R CARPENTER & CO LTD, TULAGI BRANCH: Branch Manager’s correspondence and related papers, 1925-1932. 1 reel. (Available for reference.)

PMB 1113 Not used

PMB 1114 SIMPSON, Rev. Thomas Nevison and Mrs Nellie: correspondence and other papers related to their service with the Methodist Overseas Mission, New Hanover, PNG, 1936-1942. 1 reel. (Restricted access.)


Via Torres Strait by Ian Nicholson

This is a maritime history of the Torres Strait shipping route, including the inner passage and along the Great Barrier Reef and the outer one through the Coral Sea. In it, for the first time, the full and fascinating story is told of the famous ships’ Post Office and Refuge Depot at Booby Island in the Straits.

Many wrecks are recounted, and a few reputations are wrecked as well, while others are enhanced. Some myths are exploded, and a few mysteries are revealed. It is the complete story of Australia’s most strategic seaway, from first discovery to the present day, and told by a mariner who researched the history of the Torres Strait for years and found several previously unpublished ships’ logs and documents, plus many photos, sketches and maps, with a copy of Captain Cook’s first published chart of the east coast as well.

The book is No.48 in the Roebuck Series, in a limited edition of 1,000 copies. It has 428 pages including detailed appendices and a comprehensive index, with 150 maps and illustrations, 30 of which are in full colour. The price of the softback edition is $45.00, plus postage, with a very limited number of casebound copies, at $60 plus $7 post, also available. Early orders would be appreciated direct to: Ian Nicholson, 18 Wunnungga Crescent, Yarooomba, Qld, 4573, Australia; phone No. (047) 462142.