



APSIG Newsletter

ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group

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JM Braga: the man and his collection

The National Library's Braga Collection will feature in an APSIG lunchtime talk by Dr Stuart Braga, one of JM Braga's descendants.

The talk will be held on Wednesday 11 March 2015 at 12 15 pm in the National Library's Conference Room, 4th Floor.

Dr Stuart Braga is JM 'Jack' Braga's nephew. The collection, acquired by the Library in 1966, has long been regarded as one of its gems. JM Braga's lifelong interest was the history of the Portuguese in Asia and he was an avid and knowledgeable collector throughout his life.



Portrait of Jack Braga by Sampaio Fausto 1936 in the Braga Collection

Dr Braga's talk will cover Jack's career as collector, historian, businessman, British secret agent and stalwart supporter of his Macanese heritage. Several key treasures of the collection will be on display, including maps, pictures and a rare book that was already three hundred years old when Captain Arthur Phillip was Governor of NSW.

Books, bombs and burqas: working with libraries in Afghanistan



APSIG's next lunchtime talk will feature Royce Wiles' reflections on his experiences as a volunteer librarian in Afghanistan.

To be held on Thursday 28 May 12 15 pm, National Library Conference Room

Royce Wiles went to Kabul as a librarian with Australian Volunteers International in

late-2003, intending to stay one year, he ended up staying for nine.



Bookshop, Kabul

This illustrated talk will be an overview of that period and will draw out thematic elements concerning the role of libraries and information management in nation-building and in related development work.

There will also be a book display from the National Library's collections on Afghanistan.

From microfilm to megabytes: the reinvention of PMB

A lively celebration to launch the new digital Pacific Manuscripts Bureau was held on 20 November last year at the ANU, Canberra when music, thanks, demonstrations and dance, plus food and drink, united those marking this momentous event.



Two pioneers: Dr Neil Gunson, distinguished Pacific historian and Ewan Maidment, foundation PMB archivist

So why re-invent the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau in a digital environment? Kylie Moloney, Executive Officer PMB, takes up the story:

The aim of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau is to preserve and improve access to the documentary heritage of the Pacific Islands. The Bureau was established in 1968 as part of the Research School of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University. The Bureau is a non-profit organisation sponsored by an international consortium of ten libraries specialising in Pacific Island research.

For over 40 years the Bureau has used its trusty Hidakawa microfilm camera to make preservation quality copies of historical documents in the Pacific Islands. Between 1968 and 2012, the Bureau copied a total of 838 separate record groups or titles, amounting to around 4,000 reels of microfilm.



Kylie Moloney with David Fricker, Director General, National Archives of Australia

In a fast moving digital information environment, it became apparent that, unless the Bureau was innovative and started working with digital formats, there was a risk that its great collections would be lost to new audiences and the important role that it could play, would be diminished.

As well, an important reason to act was to provide fast access via the Internet for Pacific Islanders and for the rights holders. Although microfilm is a solid preservation medium, it is not so easy to access.

Significantly, there has been a rapid uptake of online and mobile platforms not only in Australia and New Zealand, but also in the Pacific Islands. For the Bureau, digital archives offer a balance between access and rights management, with secure delivery to member libraries. Being digital, enables it to deliver its mandate whilst having controls in place to respect the role of the rights holders. The Bureau's digital collections are stored on servers in the College of Asia and Pacific and ANU Central IT in electronic form. Another copy of the preservation quality digital files is also held at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand.

We decided to use ICA-AtoM, open-source software developed by the International Council of Archives. A local software developer, Mark Triggs worked with us to configure and design AtoM in a way that was useful for the Bureau. We have now organized the migration of old PMB catalogue to new ICA-AtoM catalogue

Apart from my time, the cost of the Bureau "going digital" cost around \$15,000. This is a very small amount compared to what might have been spent! I am hoping to promote to archives in the Islands that high quality digital preservation copying projects don't need to be expensive.

We are happy that we are now repatriating digital copies of the archives back to the owners of the collections in the Pacific Islands via the simple process of a USB stick. This is usually in the form of a simple listing with linked PDFs to the digitised archival documents

We will provide member libraries with MARC records that have been exported from ICA-AtoM. Member libraries can import these directly into their catalogue and provide access to clients. Individuals can also find PMB records directly through Google search. Recently, a Vanuatu man joyfully emailed me as he'd found his

grandfather's papers using the new digital catalogue.

Access to the catalogue is at : <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/pambu/catalogue/>

As an example, a search on "Solomon Islands" generates 727 entries. There are entries for materials as diverse as newspapers, archives, local associations and photographs.

Particular thanks to Ewan Maidment, the former Executive Officer and to Maxim Korolev who has advised on digital camera equipment, standards and techniques. Julie Whiting from the National Library of Australia provided detailed feedback on the new catalogue and the testing for the MARC export and discoverability for member library catalogues. Also, to the current Chair of the Bureau, De Paul D'Arcy, and long-term Management Committee member, Associate Professor Chris Ballard.

More information at : <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/pambu/> (Edited version of a presentation made at the official launch in November).

Digitisation of Asia-Pacific books and journals by the National Library of Australia



The National Library of Australia has been digitising out-of-copyright Australian newspapers, books, pictures, sheet music, and maps for several years.

The NLA has now also started to digitise some Asia/Pacific books and journals and make them freely available online.

We are selecting Asia/Pacific titles that haven't already been digitised by another organisation such as the Internet Archive or Hathi Trust. So the publications tend to be non-mainstream titles that have few or no holdings in other libraries overseas or in Australia. These scarce and more ephemeral titles provide a valuable full-text research resource. The following four titles are available now, and more will be added very soon, including the British New Guinea/Papua New Guinea annual reports of the administrator from 1886 onwards.

Correspondence of H.M.F.M.'s Consul with the English, French & American consuls, before and after the Ningpo massacre
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-21399612>

Correspondence relating to the proposed appointment of a Chinese Consul at Hongkong
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-22441313>

The Chinese in Sumatra a study by K. Sakurai
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-20464246>
Tungking by William Mesny
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-12278301>

(Julie Whiting, Manager, Overseas Collections, NLA)

Transfer of historic Dutch collection on Indonesia

In July 2014, the incomparably rich collection on the Indonesian world, housed at the famous KITLV (also known as the Royal Institute for Linguistics and Anthropology or the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies), was transferred to Leiden University Library.

The priceless collection of over a million books and hundreds of thousands of other documents, images, maps and ephemera dates back to 1851. Scholars from around the world have been saddened and disappointed by the closing of the specialist reading room and the cessation of the

professional service provided by the highly qualified and experienced staff.

The collection will now form part of the Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries (www.library.leiden.edu/special-collections/) where it is known as the KITLV Heritage Collection. In its new location, the collection is still accessible for study and research via the Library's catalogue. Another valuable collection on Indonesia and the Malay world, that of the former Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), was transferred to Leiden University Library in 2013 and is available as part of the Special Collections under the rubric of Colonial Collection (KIT).

(George Miller)

Trove presents a new perspective on the Chinese in Australia

Most Australian historians will tell you that there was a 'before Trove' and an 'after Trove'. Being able to search and access digitised copies of hundreds of Australian newspapers, from major city dailies to small country papers, has changed the way they work and the sorts of histories they are able to write.



Nowhere is this more apparent than among those researching the history of one of Australia's oldest migrant communities — the Chinese. Over the past 20 years, historians have sought to uncover Chinese

voices within the historical record, to allow us to consider the lives of Chinese Australians on their own terms and to better understand their place within the Australian community.

Newspapers are one source that provides an astounding array of information about the individual and collective lives of Chinese people in Australia. The mainstream English-language newspapers, particularly local rural papers, that are available through Trove have facilitated new lines of historical inquiry and provided fresh insights into many aspects of the day-to-day lives of the early Chinese residents of Australia.

Behind the scenes, the NLA's digitisation, IT and Trove teams put in a lot of hard work with vendors and systems to resolve technical and OCR issues with Chinese characters, and are delighted to see the project to come to fruition. To read more see

<https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2015/02/19/early-chinese-newspapers>

(Libby Cass, NLA)

Memory of the World in Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO's Memory of the World program was established in 1992. It complements UNESCO's World Heritage Convention (for places and buildings) and Intangible Heritage Convention (for orally transmitted heritage) by focussing on the global documentary heritage – which is largely in the hands of libraries, archives and museums. It has three objectives:

- To facilitate preservation, by the most appropriate techniques
- To assist universal access
- To increase awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of documentary heritage

The program is operated by a system of international, regional and national Memory of the World Committees.

What is documentary heritage? A document is that which 'documents' or 'records' information by deliberate intent. Documents come in many textual and non-textual formats: paper, palm leaves, stone tablets, digital files, photographs, moving images and recorded sounds. Documents are vulnerable to loss through neglect, accident, war, natural calamities, chemical reactions and technological obsolescence.

Established in 1998, the Memory of the World Committee for Asia Pacific (MOWCAP) comprises the representatives of all autonomous national MOW committees and equivalent bodies within UNESCO's Asia Pacific region - 43 countries, from Mongolia in the north to New Zealand in the south, the "stan" countries, Turkey and Iran in the east to the Pacific island countries in the west. It's a region that covers half the earth's surface, includes the world's most populous and least populist countries, and contains immense cultural, economic and political diversity. At present, around half of these countries have a national MOW committee or equivalent body.

MOWCAP holds a general meeting every two years somewhere within the region (the 2014 meeting was held in Guangzhou, China) and an elected Bureau – chosen every 4 years – manages MOWCAP's work between general meetings. MOWCAP's formal statutes can be read on its website. MOWCAP is a cooperative forum which encourages information exchange, mutual support.

MOWCAP's most visible activity is the Asia Pacific Register of outstanding documentary heritage. Begun in 2008, it currently has 32 inscriptions from all over the region. To be inscribed, a document or collection must be formally nominated and undergo a rigorous assessment against criteria of authenticity, world significance, and measure relating to time, place, people, subject and theme and format. The process is detailed, and begins

with a lengthy nomination form which must be completed by the proposer, but the benefits in terms of prestige, UNESCO recognition, and the possibility of attracting sponsor funding for preservation work make the effort worthwhile. It's fully explained in the Memory of the World Companion, which can be downloaded from the international website at www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm

There are periodic international workshops designed to mentor countries not yet visible on a register in developing their first nomination. Past workshops have been held in Korea, Indonesia, Cambodia and Kyrgyzstan, and the next one will be held in China in March 2015. The selected participants are sponsored by the organising country to attend.

The Asia Pacific register can be viewed on the MOWCAP website at www.unesco.mowcap.org. Also, Asia Pacific inscriptions on the International MOW website can be checked out on the international website, above. How does mutual help work? Here's a couple of examples:

The Jose Maceda collection of ethnographic music, held at the University of the Philippines in Manila, was inscribed on the International MOW Register in 2007. It



comprised some 2000 hours of traditional

music from across South East Asia. It was endangered as the reel-to-reel and cassette tapes on which it was recorded were deteriorating.

Half a world away, the Austrian Phonogrammarchiv had just won the Memory of the World "Jikji" prize of \$30,000 for its innovative preservation work.

It decided to help out a fellow institution by donating the prize money towards the cost of digitising the Maceda collection for preservation.

In turn, the University was able to leverage that gift with other donors to complete the full budget needed to digitise the entire collection and acquire the equipment needed for the task. An agreement between the University and the Phonogrammarchiv provided for Austrian staff to train Philippine technicians who actually carried out the work. The task is now complete and the collection has been saved.



Training session in progress

On a smaller scale, the MOWCAP workshop in Cambodia in 2013 brought forward a first nomination from the Cook Islands: the 1891 proclamation "E Tuatua Akakite" which made the Islands a British Protectorate. The nomination was, in turn, inscribed on the MOWCAP register in May 2014.

The document was in very poor condition and needed urgent conservation treatment not available in the Cook Islands.



David Ashman, conservator and Jean Mason, Cook Islands representative

The Australian and New Zealand Memory of the World Committees jointly funded the conservation, restoration and re-framing of the document in Auckland. The Cook Islands now have their precious founding document back home, protected for the future.

(Ray Edmondson)

Asian library news reports

The EALRGA Newsletter (no. 65 January 2015) is now available online.

<http://www.ealrga.org.au/newsletter.html> :

Interesting articles include:

How Sir Edmund Backhouse's infamous China memoirs came to Canberra by Andrew Gosling

A report on visits to major Chinese research collections in the United Kingdom, Paris and Singapore, August - September, 2014 by Bick-har Yeung

Fourth Kyujanggak Workshop for Korean Studies Librarians from Overseas by Jung-Sim Kim

Library news:

A New Information Centre at UTS: China Library by Wei Cai

New electronic resources at Menzies Library at the Australian National University by Friederike Schimmelpfennig

Historical Chinese-Australian newspapers now available through Trove by Alex Philp
South Asia Archive by Amy Chan
Reopening of The Japan Foundation, Sydney by Hirofumi Yada
News From the Asian Studies Research Collection, Monash University by Aline Scott-Maxwell
Upcoming Conferences, compiled by Ayako Hatta

Major international Asian conference in Australia

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) will be meeting in Adelaide in July 2015. A number of Australian Asian scholarly conferences will be held at the same time. More information at:

www.icas9.com

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