



# *APSIG Newsletter*

## *ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group*

*No. 88, July 2015*

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**Buk bilong Pikinini at the NLA**

**Friday 31 July 2015, 12 30 – 1 30 pm,  
National Library of Australia Theatre, LG1**

APSIG is pleased to announce a lunchtime talk in association with the National Library by Anne-Sophie Hermann on Buk bilong Pikinini, a fast-growing project dedicated to bringing books to children in Papua New Guinea. Buk bilong Pikinini has opened 16 libraries for children across Papua New Guinea since 2007.

More details of Buk bilong Pikinini at:  
[www.bukbilongpikinini.org](http://www.bukbilongpikinini.org)

Bookings are desirable at  
<https://register.eventarc.com/30051/buk-bilong-pikinini>



Anne-Sophie with new readers in PNG

Alison Lester, noted Australian children's author, recently became a patron of Buk bilong Pikinini. A function was held at Fitzroy Town Hall in northern Melbourne earlier this year to meet her.



R to L Andrew Kelly, Wild Dog Books, Elizabeth Omeri, Anne-Sophie, both of BbP, Alison Lester.

## JM Braga: the man and his collection



Dr Braga with Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, NLA Director-General

Dr Stuart Braga, a nephew of JM ‘Jack’ Braga, gave a most interesting APSIG lunchtime talk on Wednesday 11 March 2015 at the National Library of Australia to a distinguished audience including many with a Portuguese background and from Macau. Many library staff who are involved in providing service on the Braga collection, also attended to gain more insight into the life and times of Jack Braga.

JM ‘Jack’ Braga’s extensive collection of books, maps and manuscripts was acquired by the National Library of Australia in 1966 and is one of its treasures.

Dr Braga’s talk covered Jack’s career as collector, historian, businessman, British secret agent and stalwart supporter of his Macanese heritage. His detailed knowledge of J M Braga’s life and times gave a nuanced view of the collection which filled so much of his uncle’s life. Various of the treasures of the collection were on display, including maps, pictures and rare books.

A full description of the collection prepared by Pauline Haldane in 1984 is on the

Library’s website.

<https://www.nla.gov.au/braga-collection/portuguese-in-asia>.

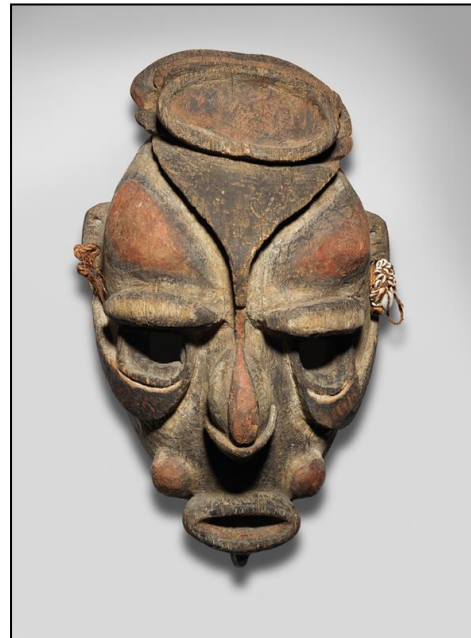
A description of the papers in the Manuscript collection is at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms4300-dl.pdf>.

## Art of the Sepik River

Exhibition Myth + Magic: Art of the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea, NGA Temporary Exhibition Gallery, 7 August – 1 November 2015

This forthcoming exhibition brings together for the first time 80 exceptional works of traditional art from the Sepik River region selected from Australian collections alongside five masterpieces from the collection of the National Museum & Art Gallery of Papua New Guinea.

Myth + magic highlights the arts of the lower and middle Sepik River communities through remarkable sculptures, masks and objects made for ritual and performance.



The majority of these arts have not been publicly displayed before and it is hoped that such a selection of the very finest will have an impact on Australian audiences and raise their awareness of our closest Pacific neighbour, Papua New Guinea.

The exhibition covers arts from the Murik Lakes, the lower Sepik, the Porapora, Keram, Yuat and Korewori Rivers as well as that of the Iatmul and Sawos people of the Middle Sepik region. Myth + Magic focus on the period between 1914 and 1939 when Australian involvement in the Sepik region resulted in large collections of Sepik art entering Australia. The collections built during this were made for the study of anthropology; however, today these objects can be viewed as impressive works of art that reflect their communities' cultural identity.

An accompanying fully illustrated catalogue will further contribute to our understanding of the traditional art of the Sepik River region.

There will also be a forum at the National Gallery on Friday 7 August 9.30 am – 4.30 pm on the Art of the Sepik River in Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia, in conjunction with the Oceanic Arts Society. There will be talks on the art of the Sepik River with experts on Papua New Guinean art, culture and history, in association with the Oceanic Arts Society. \$100, \$90 nga members/OAS members/concession (includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch) bookings at <https://online.nga.gov.au/symposia>.

Invited speakers include Dr Eric Kjellgren, former Curator, Oceanic Art at the Metropolitan Museum, New York and now Director, American Museum of Asmat Art, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota. Edith Young, National Gallery of Australia

### **Books, bombs and burquas**

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. He gave a very interesting and even entertaining talk with the title he chose, 'Books, bombs and burquas : working with libraries in

Afghanistan (2003-2012)', at an APSIG lunchtime talk 28 May at the National Library.



L to R: Dr Royce Wiles, Amelia McKenzie and Alex Philp of NLA

One of APSIG's best attended talks, more chairs had to be brought in to cope with the crowd. The universities and government agencies were evident. As well, there were a number of his old friends in the audience who remembered Royce from his time at ANU and the National Library prior to his time in Afghanistan.

Royce presented his immensely thought-provoking talk as an overview of that period which drew out thematic elements concerning the role of libraries and information management in nation-building and in related development work. Much of it was relevant to any library's mission across the globe. Here is a summary in his own words.

### **Library and information management in Kabul, 2003-2012**

I was recruited by Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in 2003 to work as a librarian and information management specialist with a newly established research agency in Kabul, Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) ([www.areu.org.af](http://www.areu.org.af)). The AVI contract was for one year, but I ended up staying on for nine years as an AREU employee.

I worked with dozens of national and international development agencies, government libraries, local academic institutions and others in Kabul working to set up libraries or improve information management in Afghanistan. In the talk I very briefly mentioned some points concerning challenges for library and information workers in post-conflict and similar scenarios (these are not new and echo and underline the experiences of others in other development scenarios).

#### The single most important lesson

The single-most important lesson is the need to continue to raise awareness of how essential libraries and information management are amongst international staff working in aid, development, security, education, policy, budgeting etc. as well as among local actors making decisions about funding and planning (government agencies, ministers, educators, etc.). Without this awareness there is no way for library and information management functions and solutions to find their way into development budgets and programmes.

#### The conditions of success

Prior to setting up library and information management functions in these contexts a number of facilitating conditions need to be addressed:

1. Security (of both staff and collections)
2. Electricity supply
3. Stable and reasonably speedy internet access
4. Roman script competency (if the local languages are not in Roman script)
5. Library software solutions need to be explored (with at least an interface in the local language(s)); possible solutions are Greenstone, Koha, ResourceMate, etc.
6. In prolonged conflict situations tertiary education is often disrupted or non-existent so recruiting soundly educated local staff to train in library and

information management is a continuing challenge (higher salaries may be needed to retain trained staff)

7. With dys- or non-functional state institutions the question of how to relate to failed state institutions needs to be negotiated

#### Cultural negotiations

Cultural negotiations are also often necessary to allow for local views on

- a. 'seniority'
- b. gender issues
- c. the professional standing of local library staff
- d. "access to information" which is often a problematic concept in post-conflict situations

#### 'Salvage collecting'

'Salvage' collecting of previously issued publications (especially in the immediate post-conflict period) is necessary early on to re-establish access to statistical compilations, census data, laws etc. In this regard, surviving collections of in-country or expatriate scholars and other private accumulations offer ways to rapidly access specialist collections.

Web-based databases and digital repositories outside the country are also recommended in case security or other local conditions deteriorate as they offer uninterrupted sources of information for both local and international researchers.

I have published two articles recently exploring these and related issues focused on Afghanistan libraries and information management and research access challenges.

2012 "Trophy libraries and strategic opacity: challenges setting up information management functions for the Afghan legal sector (2003-2011)" In, *snapshots of an intervention: the unlearned lessons of Afghanistan's decade of assistance (2001-11)*. Berlin/Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts' Network (AAN). <http://aan->

[afghanistan.com/uploads/21\\_Wiles\\_Trophy\\_Libraries.pdf](http://afghanistan.com/uploads/21_Wiles_Trophy_Libraries.pdf)

2015 “Access to research on Afghanistan: the state of play”, *Afghanistan research newsletter* 31, p. 3-10. <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/1510E-%20Afghanistan%20Research%20Newsletter.%20Issue%2031.pdf>

Royce Wiles (royce.wiles@gmail.com)

## Memory of the World meeting in China

A Memory of the World Asia Pacific (MOWCAP) Training Workshop was held in Suzhou, China, 24 to 27 March. Participants came from the Solomons, Vietnam, China, North Korea, Mongolia, Indonesia and Myanmar. A large number of observers from various provincial archives in China were also present.



Margaret Inifiri, Deputy Government Archivist from the National Archives of the Solomon Islands was a participant (pictured here with Ray Edmondson). She brought a draft nomination for records from the British colonial era of the Solomons, which was refined through expert advice and discussion in the course of the workshop. (Ray Edmondson)

## East Timor documentation preserved

CHART (Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor) aims to preserve the archival records of Australian community involvement in the East Timor issue from 1974 to 1999. It helps collection owners preserve key physical collections, and assist them to plan a future home for the material. CHART is also working to digitise key series and items in these collections, to make them more widely accessible online.

### Significance of non-government records

Many Australians - individuals, churches, aid organisations, and advocacy groups - were actively involved in East Timor, from late 1974 through the period of occupation by Indonesian military forces until after the 1999 independence ballot. Since that time, most of the documentary collections generated by this work have languished, with a clear risk that parts would be lost to future generations.

These records are a vital complement to extensive official records held by National Archives of Australia. Collectively, these records are irreplaceable primary source materials on a key part of the history of the Australia-Indonesia-East Timor relationship. These materials have enduring value for researchers, historians and educators in all three countries.

CHART is an incorporated non-profit organisation based in Melbourne. The staff includes archivist John Waddingham and a small team of part-time assistants who carry out scanning and archival tasks. A range of organisations and individuals provide support, both financial and in-kind, to enable ongoing collection work and document digitisation. Updates of our activities are published on our website <https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/>.

Since 2001, CHART has identified, secured and described several important collections

in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Canberra. In the past two years, we have digitised hundreds of files and a selection of audiovisual items, in preparation for online access.



The National Film and Sound Archive has helped CHART with better access for data : Tim Cowie (left) and Tenille Hands (second from right) are pictured. John Waddingham (centre) and Cecily from CHART pictured.

The project has also digitised four Timor-related periodicals and newsletters from the period 1975-1988 and partnered with Melbourne's Victoria University Library to digitise two significant UK titles which are now online through VU. Links to the digitised journals can be found at CHART's periodicals website. (<https://chartperiodicals.wordpress.com/>)

In addition to preserving the material and facilitating universal access online, CHART is also committed to ensuring East Timorese have easy access to these materials. Given poor internet quality in Timor-Leste, we envisage making our digital materials available through standalone desktop computers in the capital, Dili. Likely sites for such installations include the National University, the Timorese Resistance Archive and Museum and the National Archive of Timor-Leste.

CHART's major targets for 2015/16 include:

- Establishing a digital library system for online access and desktop access in Timor-Leste to CHART digitised materials.
- Consolidating and implementing

strategies for long-term preservation of audio-visual items

- Expansion of joint-projects with Australian and East Timorese archival institutions to further CHART aims.

We welcome feedback and comments from the APSIG community on these activities. (Cecily Gilbert, CHART Board)

### Together we're helping Vanuatu

Churning in the South Pacific, category 5 Cyclone Pam made a direct hit on the island nation of Vanuatu on March 12-14, 2015. Unfortunately the storm destroyed book collections used by many school libraries to the detriment of students across the archipelago.



Soon after the cyclone hit, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) contacted Chief Librarian and Archivist, June Bela Naviti, of the National Library of Vanuatu to see what help could be provided. The National Library was spared major impact, so June requested that efforts be focused on replenishing the school library collections.

ALIA quickly set up a fund raising campaign through its advocacy website - FAIR which stands for Freedom of Access to Information and Resources. ALIA was joined by the American Library Association whose members also raised some funds for Vanuatu.



June Bela Naviti, Vanuatu National Librarian

The combined effort raised AUD \$4,000 which has been used to buy educational books provided at a discounted rate and they will soon be on their way to Vanuatu.

For further updates please subscribe to the FAIR newsletter.  
(Heather Wellard ALIA)

### Promoting access to Pacific and indigenous languages



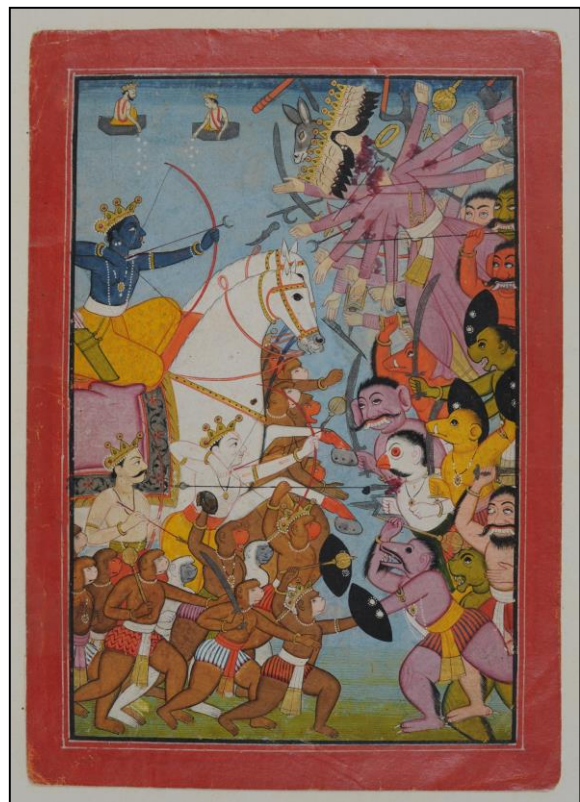
Congratulations to our Pacific colleague Eleanor Kleiber (pictured), who received the Sarah K Vann Professional Service Award earlier this year from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. She received the award in recognition of her service to librarianship in Hawai'i, especially from the perspective of Pacific and indigenous languages access.

Through her professional activities Eleanor has pursued ways of making works in Pacific and indigenous languages more discoverable. Most recently this has included a grant-funded project on Pacific languages in collaboration with the UHM Linguistics Department and the UHM Library's Cataloging Department.

### The story of Rama

The National Gallery of Australia in Canberra has on display 'The story of Rama: Indian miniatures from the National Museum, New Delhi' until 23 August 2015

The exhibition tells the story of the Ramayana through one hundred and one paintings, each illustrating a key moment from the narrative.



A tale of love, loyalty, betrayal and the victory of good over evil, the Ramayana is one of the world's great epics. The paintings were created between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries in locations across India and present the diversity of regional painting styles. The exhibition was curated by the

National Museum, New Delhi, from their extensive collection.

### **ANU Library and NLA sign MoU on Asian and Pacific collecting**



L to R Maggie Shapley, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington, Roxanne Missingham and Amelia McKenzie

On 31 July the ANU Library and the National Library of Australia formalized their long-standing cooperation over Asian and Pacific collecting by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU replaced several long-standing agreements over Chinese, Japanese and Korean collecting, some drawn up as long ago as 1955 when collecting from Asia was in its infancy in Australia's libraries. New to the MoU was a commitment to share resources and information relating to archival and Pacific collections. The two institutions undertook to consult each other over significant acquisition decisions, including new e-resources, and to allow each other's users access to collections.

The MoU was signed by Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, Director-General of the NLA, and Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), ANU.

"The collections of the National Library and the Australian National University are of world renown, supporting the research of students and researchers as well as attracting visiting scholars," Anne-Marie Schwirtlich said. "Our cooperation has been strategic

and systematic not only in building collections but in providing access through national resource discovery systems to benefit researchers around the world."

Ms Schwirtlich said the new Agreement supported cooperation in developing collections, providing access to them and sharing information on activities and staffing that would contribute to efficient and effective services.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at ANU, Marnie Hughes-Warrington said deep collaboration lay at the heart of building internationally significant collections. "The relationship between the two institutions will continue to benefit international research, particularly in Asia, the Pacific and labour and business history," Professor Hughes-Warrington said. "The collections put Canberra well and truly on the international researcher map."

### **APSIG Newsletter**

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Contact: Marie Sexton, Editor  
([msexton@netspeed.com.au](mailto:msexton@netspeed.com.au)) telephone 02-62 477795.

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