



# APSIG Newsletter

ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group

No. 55, July 2004

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### APSIG sponsors

Our thanks to two Canberra businesses who have been supporting APSIG.

OneUmbrella, a Canberra-based library staffing consultancy firm, has provided refreshments several times for APSIG talks. Their website is <http://www.oneumbrella.com.au>

Sally Burdon and the friendly staff of the Asia Bookroom, Belconnen, ACT, have kindly donated book vouchers which are given away as door prizes at APSIG functions. Asia Bookroom has also been active in supporting local efforts to assist East Timor libraries. We have included an AsiaBookroom brochure with this issue for the information of newsletter

readers. Asia Bookroom's website is <http://www.AsiaBookroom.com>

And as always we thank ALIA for its ongoing support of the APSIG newsletter, which enables us to mail out print copies to readers outside Australia and without email.

### Going back to the village

*Deveni Temu, APSIG convenor, writes:*

Last Christmas, my family and I travelled to Kapari and Viriolo villages to visit our extended family members and to celebrate Christmas and New Year with the village people. These two adjacent coastal villages are situated approximately 220 km south-east of Port Moresby in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea.

Christmas in a PNG village is a big occasion. All the villagers who have left to work in the big towns return with lots of food (alcohol is banned) and gifts - usually clothes or money. On Christmas Eve, we went to Kapari's central square to join in singing traditional *Peroveta* (Prophet) songs, many of them based on the Old or New Testament stories. This style of singing was introduced by the missionaries from the Cook Islands, who were brought to PNG by the London Missionary Society in the late 1880s. Some of the songs are very complex, with many parts, and they are always started by women. We sang for about four hours and at midnight, the young people of the village arrived with late supper which included kettles of hot, sweet black tea, damper and slices of pineapples. After the communal supper, prayers were said, Christmas greetings exchanged then everyone returned to their respective houses for a good night's sleep.

On Christmas Day, all the village people dressed in their best clothes attended the church service. This particular service was both

historical and unique in that it was the first ever to be led by an all women's group from Port Moresby. After the service, everyone returned home for the family Christmas meal. In the afternoon, we all gathered in the village square again to watch performances by the various clans of songs, sketches or traditional dances.

New Year's Day was just as full of fun and games as ever. Once again, most people attended the New Year church service. There is a local tradition that at the end of the service, as the congregation emerges from the church building, young boys and girls prepared buckets of mud and water to throw over the people. Soon everyone in the village joined in and some young men and women went into each home and carried the elderly and anyone else they could find to the river or the sea for the communal wash, symbolising a new start. Strangely enough, it was a high tide; the sea came right up under the houses, which are built on stilts, so many chose to wash and swim under or near their houses. Of course, there is more food for all the extended family; relatives came from far and near to join in.

Then there were the village games - who can husk and scrape a coconut the fastest, swimming and canoe races, who can stay underwater longest, shooting the ball into a netball hoop, joke-telling competitions and races in the sand. The villages take great care and pride in organising lots of competitions in the week between Christmas and New Year, to keep all the young people (including those visiting from Port Moresby) occupied.

On our first free afternoon, my family and I took a walk along the beach to see the Konepoti Primary School which my brothers, sister and I attended in the sixties and seventies respectively. The school is located about 2 km from the two villages. The school currently has over 180 children in six classrooms, one for each grade (3-8), and fourteen teachers. It is a government-funded school but, with many years of inadequate funding levels, the up-keep and the general lack of regular maintenance of the teachers' houses, classrooms and the other school buildings was obvious. What was of interest to me, and also caught my wife's attention, was the little square building standing on stilts, right in the centre of the school; desperately in need of a fresh coat of paint but still faintly labelled **LIBRARY**. Unfortunately,

we were not able to look inside but my brothers told me that there were hardly any books in the library. I was also told that this library was built in the nineties by the village community. The villagers could only afford to construct a library large enough to house the books only. There were no funds to add a reading room. Because of the school holidays, I was unable to see any teachers to find out more about the library, but from what I could gather, the little library building is now used as a general store room. The Chairman of the School Board is keen to seek overseas funding to improve and extend the existing building.

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### **Helen Jarvis : drawn to the trials of a country marked by war**

There can't be too many Australians who move to another country in response to the personal plea of one of that country's most senior politicians.

But Helen Jarvis, a name well-known to APSIG members, is in just that position.

Cambodia's Sok An, Special Minister for Cabinet and the man who has been driving Phnom Penh's push for a war crimes tribunal to try the surviving leaders of the notorious Khmer Rouge, invited Helen to be his personal adviser after begging for her help in 1999. Soon to be awarded "Honorary Cambodian citizenship" because of that contribution to her adopted home, Helen now lives with her American husband and three other friends in a traditional-style wooden house on the banks of the Mekong. There, she struggles with the usual day-to-day problems of living in Cambodia. Until recently, the house in a village about 10 km from Phnom Penh, relied on village electricity which sometimes worked and often didn't. Water is pumped up from the river and telephones are expensive and unreliable.

But Helen says the best thing about life there is the unexpected. "That you get up in the

morning and you have no idea what will happen in the course of the day, whether there's a huge political upheaval or the road will be totally flooded and you can't get to work. It drives some people crazy, but others thrive".

She thought that the job offered to her by Sok An would be technical, involving her designing a program to transfer Khmer Rouge documents to a prosecution brief. She thought it would take six months and secured funding from the Australian government. It turned out to be four years of protracted political and legal negotiations with the UN on the format of the tribunal. "I am very happy here, my Cambodian citizenship is a great honour and my work here is more than a full-time job. I see no reason to rush away."

Helen recently reported that she has now a grand-daughter, Leto, born late last year.

Article with acknowledgement to The Australian's Kimina Lyall.

### **Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict**

After many years hard work and campaigning, the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict finally came into force on 9 March. The Protocol greatly strengthens and clarifies cultural protection and introduces new measures including the designation of cultural property under Enhanced Protection, specific war crimes, and new administrative procedures including the establishment of an International Committee and International Fund for the Protection of Culture. The Second Protocol is not retrospective in respect of events before this date and initially is it is binding only on, and between, those States that have adopted it by ratification or accession. The list of States Parties (i.e. countries that have agreed to be bound by) to the Second Protocol is on the UNESCO website at:

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/hague/images/2plist.doc>

Australia is NOT included as a signatory.

### **Busy author : Andrew Gosling continues his writings**

Andrew, who retired from the National Library in early 2003, is continuing to write on Asian studies library matters. His "Buying books in my garage : memories of an Indonesian Acquisitions Librarian" is in National Library of Australia News, December 2003 : 11-14 [[www.nla.gov.au/pub/nlanews/2003/dec03/article3.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/pub/nlanews/2003/dec03/article3.html)]. It describes living and working in Indonesia between 1979 and 1983 as the NLA's representative in Jakarta. The April 2004 issue of the same monthly will contain his introduction to the National Library's Asian language holdings with an Australian connection. It will cover Chinese, Japanese and other Asian language works about Australia, writings by Asian Australians and translations of Australian authors into Asian languages. He is also preparing an article for publication in this monthly later in 2004 on the eminent ANU China scholar and bibliographer, Otto van der Sprekel (1906-1978), whose Chinese collection is held at NLA. The first part of a series by Andrew on his 30 years working at the NLA has appeared in the East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia Newsletter, January 2004 : 11-15, as "From Orientalia to Indonesia : my first years at the National Library of Australia".

### **Hot Asian Studies in cold Canberra**

*George Miller writes:*

Asian Studies are alive and well in Australia, judging by the number of delegates and the quality of the papers at the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 15th Biennial Conference in Canberra, 29 June - 2 July 2004. There were nearly 500 attendees and almost 400 papers, many by aspiring young scholars. The Association has been consistent in organising its conference every second year during the 30 years of its existence; no mean feat!

At meetings which addressed the issue of the health of Asian Studies, there was an up-beat flavour, despite a number of specific areas of concern such as the failure to reach target numbers for students of Asian languages (for example, the University of Western Sydney will no longer teach Indonesian from 2005) and a potential decline in established expertise.

On the positive side, the ASAA has been instrumental in obtaining more scholarships for two-way exchanges with Asian institutions, the new Centre for Excellence in Asian and Pacific Studies at the ANU will include a paid ASAA Secretariat for the first time, the Association now has a promotions officer and the Association's own report, *Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge*, is being used as a lobbying tool not only in public institutions but by academics themselves, within their own universities.

Another positive sign is that there is more Asian content in areas of study not traditionally seen as 'Asian Studies'; disciplines such as environmental studies, public health and criminology. People in these fields are flying off to Asian countries to undertake fieldwork or to engage in cooperative research projects with Asian colleagues. One challenge for the ASAA is to ensure these people become members of the Asian Studies fraternity.

Conference papers covered the usual wide gambit of subjects, from the study of classical texts ("The Fall of the Indigo Jackal: The Discourse of Division in Purnabhadra's Pancatantra") to the latest fashionable scholarly preoccupations ("AsiaPacifiQueer: Queer Cultures and Queer Theories in Asia Today").

The conference website contains a full program at <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/ASAA/conference/>

Several sessions on publishing, highlighted the fact that the book and the scholarly journal are still vital for the dissemination of scholarly information, irrespective of the immense volume of data available through electronic means.

Two Canberra Asian Studies librarians, Amelia McKenzie (NLA) and Renata Osborne (ANU), on behalf of APSIG and EALRGA (East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia), emphasising the modern, organised a panel entitled "New avenues for academic publishing". Two topics at the forefront of current debate were covered, e-publishing and copyright issues. Colin Steele and Lorena Kanellopoulos of the ANU described national and international developments in electronic publishing and Publication on Demand. Wan Wong of NLA outlined the burgeoning volume

of electronic publishing in China. Her paper, E-Publishing in China, is at <http://www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/2004/wong1.html>. Colette Ormonde of ALIA drew attention to negative implications for the free dissemination of information in Australia if the U.S. copyright regime is applied in Australia under the proposed United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement. ALIA has made a submission to the Senate Select Committee considering this.

<http://alia.org.au/advocacy/submissions/free.trade.html>

### **ALIA Biennial Conference on the Gold Coast in September**

Are there any APSIG members (or others interested in Asia and the Pacific) who are willing to run an informal sociable gathering over coffee for people from Australia and the region? The aim is to meet with others and exchange views during the conference. To be run at a very informal and friendly level with everyone paying for themselves at a local coffee shop or cafe. It looks unlikely that anyone from the Canberra committee will be attending the ALIA conference.

A brief report back to the *APSIG newsletter* would be welcomed.

If you are willing to help, contact the APSIG convener, Deveni Temu ([DTemu@csu.edu.au](mailto:DTemu@csu.edu.au)).

### **East Timor update (1): Dili Institute of Technology**

*Avenell Hicks reports:*

Until recently I worked as a librarian at Edith Cowan University in Perth and I commenced my two-year stint as librarian at the Dili Institute of Technology on 10<sup>th</sup> May this year. (My husband and I are both in East Timor through Australian Volunteers International to work at the Institute). This day just happened to be the second anniversary of DIT, so was treated to a day of celebrations and partying. Rather an auspicious day to start.

DIT is progressively rehabilitating buildings at a site previously used by the Indonesian police, and when I first arrived the building which was to house the library was still just a shell. For

the first four weeks I familiarised myself (largely by trial and error) with Winisis which I'm to use for the catalogue, visited other libraries in Dili and made myself rough notes on policies, budget, planning etc. It was great to visit the Xanana Gusmao Reading Room and UNTL library and to meet people I'd read about in the APSIG and FUNTLL newsletters! During this time I also had a visit from Patti Manolas who is currently conducting a survey of libraries in East Timor. As well as all this I "helped" the English teacher with some of her classes. She will be very glad when a qualified ESL teacher arrives later this month.

As the date of the official opening (by Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister of the ACT) drew nearer and work on the building became ever more frenetic, I realised I would only have a day or so to set up the library. In an effort to make it look like "a Library" for the opening I prepared (in Bahasa, English and Tetun) a few signs, a summary of the Dewey system and some shelf labels for the main topics covered by DIT courses. On the Friday morning the shelving, donated from Australia, was retrieved from storage and re-assembled and mid-afternoon a horde of student volunteers descended and we blu-tac'd the signs up and roughly sorted the books onto the shelves. Just in time for the official opening on Monday June 7th. The remainder of the week I spent stamping books and more carefully organising them on the shelves, so the students could start to use them, while I set about getting them catalogued.

The collection has about 1000 volumes, some in English donated from Australia, some new in Bahasa Indonesia purchased with a donation from the Asia Foundation, and a few published locally in Tetun. The library has one main room full of shelving, with an alcove at one end housing four PCs for student use, an adjacent reading room with desks for study, and another small room which will be the photocopy room – when the photocopier arrives.

It will remain a nonlending library until the collection has grown a bit. For now we are working on obtaining funding for Internet access and some sort of security system, and I will get down to cataloguing.

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### **East Timor update (2): Jill Haynes returns to Dili.**

Jill Haynes, the Library Manager at the Australian Institute of Sport, has now set off again for Dili. Her talk at the Asia Bookroom earlier this year was reported in March 2004 issue of the *APSIG newsletter*. Jill will be working as liaison officer for APHEDA, the Australian NGO which has been supporting library volunteers. She can be contacted at : [jill\\_haynes17@hotmail.com](mailto:jill_haynes17@hotmail.com)

Results of the trivia nights in Canberra and Melbourne to raise funds for libraries were excellent. Over \$33 000 was raised.

### **Indonesian language teaching supported**

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JACFADT) recently released a report into Australia's relationship with Indonesia. The report (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/indonesia/report.htm>) contains 28 recommendations. Recommendation 19 proposes that the government restore Commonwealth support for Asian languages in schools (the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Program), previously withdrawn by the government in 2002 (Recommendation 19). The cessation of this schools program resulted in a significant net loss of funding for Asian languages in schools.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Asian Library and Information Conference (ALIC2004)**

[www.alic2004.org](http://www.alic2004.org) is being organized by the Thai Library Association and Asia Library News, to be held at the Dusit Thani Hotel, Bangkok, from November 21 to November 24, 2004. ALIC2004 is supported by UNESCO and IFLA.

The main objectives of the conference are to promote library and information services

throughout the Asia-Pacific region in a rapidly changing digital and knowledge-based social environment, to address various issues that affect the library and information profession, and to provide a forum for librarians from the region and elsewhere to network, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

A panel of more than 28 distinguished information professionals and experts from various countries in the region will address the audience during the three-day conference. Current and timely topics include: the changing role of library and information professionals; information access, online resources licensing and copyrights; collection development in the digital age; e-resources versus print resources; ICT for library and information services; digital library development in the Asia-Pacific countries, and more.

### **APSIG forthcoming events**

Late September (tbc) lunch in Canberra with visiting law librarians from the Pacific.

12 October, 12.30-1.30 pm, at the NLA  
APSIG Preservation Seminar: 'Born digital: future challenges of heritage conservation.'  
Three distinguished speakers.

15 November:  
Visit to the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau at ANU. 4 30 pm

More details in *ProACTIVE* published by the A.L.I.A. A.C.T. Branch.

### **APSIG Newsletter**

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Back issues mounted on the APSIG homepage at <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/apsig/>

Copies of the APSIG newsletter are sent via the Internet to members with email addresses.



