

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

It is disappointing not to be able to bring you news of the outcome of our Cabinet Submission on the management of government records and archives foreshadowed in the last issue of *Records Territory*. This is particularly so in view of the input of government agency staff to the records management review conducted in 1993 and the expectations it raised.

As I write this the Territory is in the throes of an election campaign. In keeping with many others, our Submission will now have to await the election result and the formation of a new Government. We shall have to wait and see whether the Archives' cab is one of the first off the rank.

Meanwhile, in this issue of *Records Territory* we offer you some encouragement in the matter of records transfers and demonstrate in a variety of ways the value of the Archives' programs and the continuing management of the Territory's documentary heritage.

Don Brech

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LIBRARY STUDENTS VISIT THE ARCHIVES

Sixteen library students made contact with the world of archives early in their career when they visited NTAS at McMinn Street on 24 May.

The visit formed part of the Associate Diploma in Library Practice course conducted by the NT University.

Greg Coleman spoke to the students about the operation of the repository and its services. The visit concluded with a tour of the processing and storage areas.



Greg Coleman (standing) welcomes NTU library students in the Search Room at the Archives

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RECORDS TRANSFER PROGRAM RENEWED

In September 1991, the NTAS was faced with the problem feared by all archival institutions - we ran out of space.

And, as most Territory Government agencies soon discovered, this created subsequent problems for records managers as they were unable to move their non-current records off-site.

In the middle of last year, additional storage space was made available through a leasing agreement with Australian Archives. The agreement allowed for the storage of 1,000 shelf metres of records to be transferred to their repository at Nightcliff each year until the end of June 1996.

I am pleased to report that, in the last 12 months, the backlog of transfers has been

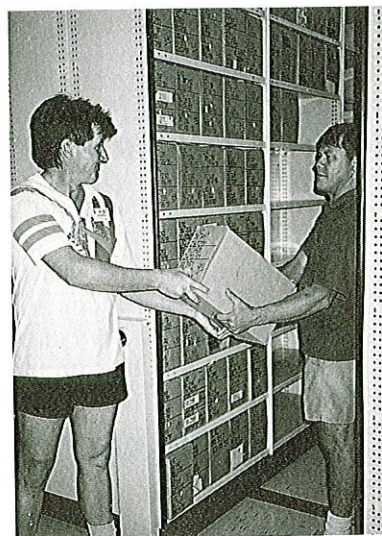


Hard yakka - unloading records at the Nightcliff repository

substantially reduced, with over 1,000 shelf metres of records transferred.

Those agencies still waiting for their transfers to be accepted will have them taken in during the next few months, at which time NTAS will be able to recommence normal transfer arrangements which will mean only minimal waiting periods.

I should like to thank all the agencies who have had to wait on 'the list' for their patience while we secured the additional storage space and to assure them that transfers will be back to normal very soon.



Shelving records in the repository, L-R: Neville Horrocks and Chris Spicer

My thanks, too, to Neville and Chris, the Records Services staff who have processed all transfers while continuing to maintain the Lending Service.

*Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)*

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RECENT ACCESSIONS

The following records were recently processed:

GOVERNMENT RECORDS

NT Liquor Commission: Exhibits, administration, application and licence files, 1979-1990

Chief Minister's Department: General correspondence files, 1979-1989

NT Tourist Commission: General administration and personnel files, 1979-1993

NT Treasury, Loans Management Unit: Loan and general administration files, 1976-1990

Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory: Personnel, general administration and environment files and Rum Jungle correspondence, 1968-1993

Department of Correctional Services: Parole Board and Juvenile Justice files and general administration files, 1974-1992

Work Health Authority: General correspondence files, 1987-1989

Commissioner of Taxes: Taxes and charges files and receipts and register strips, 1987-1992

Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries: General correspondence, personnel and Veterinary Surgeons Board files, Fisheries correspondence, Cabinet submissions and decisions, 1975-1991

Department of Health and Community Services: General correspondence and personnel files, 1985-1989

Office of the Auditor-General: Departmental audit files, 1981-1991

Territory Insurance Office: Workers' compensation files, 1986-1993

Department of Transport and Works, Power and Water Authority: General correspondence and personnel files, 1978-1990

Department of Health and Community Services, Alcohol and other Drugs Program: Minutes, agendas and alcohol consumption survey records, 1985-1992

Department of Transport and Works, Motor Vehicle Registry: Licence applications, 1979-1985

Office of Business Affairs: Business name and Associations files, 1960-1992

Adult Migrant Education Centre: General correspondence files, 1983-1990

Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment: General correspondence files, 1980-1988

NT Treasury: General and NCOM correspondence files, Cabinet submissions, Budget papers, Recovery and and Tender Board files, 1973-1992

Darwin Dental Clinic: Dental records, Dental X-rays and School dental cards, 1970-1992

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions: Prosecution files, 1978-1989.

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EVENTS ACROSS THE BORDER

May was a time for lots of fraternising with our interstate comrades in the archives and oral history business.

A meeting of the Council of Federal, State and Territory Archives (COFSTA) in Brisbane on 6 May was attended by the Principal Archivist, **Greg Coleman**. The major agenda items included the publishing of joint guides to records holdings, shared standards for records management and archival policies, and the linking of government archives databases through the AARNet communication facility.

The NTAS flag was also flown by **Francis Good**, Archivist (Oral Records), who took time out from holidays to conduct a workshop on oral history transcription at a conference held by the Queensland Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia at Magnetic Island.

The oral history conference was followed by the national conference of the Australian Society of Archivists in Townsville, 9-10 May, where Francis presented another very well received paper about the audio and transcription technology used at NTAS.

Francis and Greg participated in seminars about records conservation in the tropics, electronic records and records relating to indigenous people.

Also present from the Territory were **Margaret Clinch**, former NT University archivist, **Judy Watts** and **Gary Childs** from Australian Archives in Darwin, and a large number of representatives of Aboriginal organisations from Alice Springs, including **Fabian Hutchinson** and **Vivienne Larking**.

There was strong interest shown in a future annual conference of the Australian Society of Archivists' being held in Darwin, possibly in a couple of years.

Greg Coleman

ARCHIVES CHOSEN FOR WORK EXPERIENCE

Taminmin High School student **Kelly-Ann Buntain** chose NTAS as the place for her week of work experience in April.

Kelly-Ann, whose main subjects are agriculture, maths, computer studies and conservation, discovered that NTAS was more than "just



about records". Asked what she liked best about the week she replied "being with people and fitting in". And she did just that.

During the week she assisted with data entry into the Lending Service computer system and processing records, including checking the order and boxing of files. She also acquired a new skill - photocopying.

In addition to gaining office experience for her resume, Kelly-Ann said that she thought the most useful thing she had learned was that "work was not a bludge", it actually meant working! We couldn't agree more.

It was a pleasure having you with us, Kelly-Ann. Good luck in your future career.

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STAFF NOTES

They come and they go. During the past few months they have gone.

Bernie Bell, our secretary and receptionist since early 1990, left to return to South Australia in April. The offer of a position as office manager at a sports centre in her home town proved to be one she could not refuse. We've heard from her since and understand she still manages to fit in work between basketball matches!

Departure number two was **Sue Harlow** in the Oral History Unit. At the end of her contract in February, Sue took up a part-time research assistant's post at the University. Happily, we see her from time to time as work brings her our way.

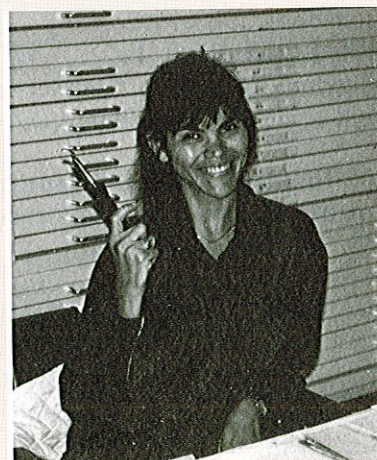
The Oral History Unit also lost **David James** who had worked part-time as audio technical assistant on the tape preservation program. David left us in April with plans to go overseas. Safe travelling, David, and thanks for your help.

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MICROFILMING OF GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S RECORDS

In the last issue of *Records Territory* we outlined the microfilming project of the Inwards Correspondence of the Government Resident, 1870-1911.

At that time, work had slowed owing to the lack of staff to repair and prepare records for filming. In this issue I am pleased to announce that we have recently obtained the services of **Lena Hussien** from CMS Pty Ltd for a period of four months to carry out this preparatory work.



Lena commenced work with NTAS in early April and has recently completed the task of records preparation. She has now begun a quality check of completed microfilms.

It is anticipated that the project will soon be finished, enabling researchers to have access to an accurate and legible copy of these valuable records.

Linda Bell

ORAL HISTORY: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DO IT

This was the theme of the oral history seminar and workshops attended by some 40 people at the Mirambeena Tourist Resort, Darwin on 8-9 April.

The event was organised by the Archives' Oral History Unit and presented jointly by **Ronda Jamieson**, arguably Australia's foremost practitioner in the field who currently heads the oral history program of the Battye Library at the State Library and Information Service of Western Australia, and **Francis Good**, manager of the Oral History Unit.



L-R: Ronda Jamieson and Sue Harlow (Photo courtesy of Helen Wilson)

A half-day seminar on Friday afternoon headed the programme, in which Francis and Ronda described the oral history work and collections of their institutions and discussed the role of the Oral History Association of Australia.

This was followed by discussions by five Territory interviewers of their work in diverse fields: **Dr Tony Austin**, a teacher at NT University who has studied and published on government policy and part-Aboriginal youth; **Dr Mickey Dewar** of the NT Museums, a scholar and writer on such subjects as the NT Women's Advisory Council, NT literature and the Yolgnu people of Arnhem Land; **Dino Hodge**, author of a recent oral history on homosexual men in the Territory; **David James**, an award-winning radio journalist; and **Darell Lewis** who is soon to publish a book based on over 20 hours of taped interviews with **Charlie Schultz**, owner of Humbert River Station for about 50 years.

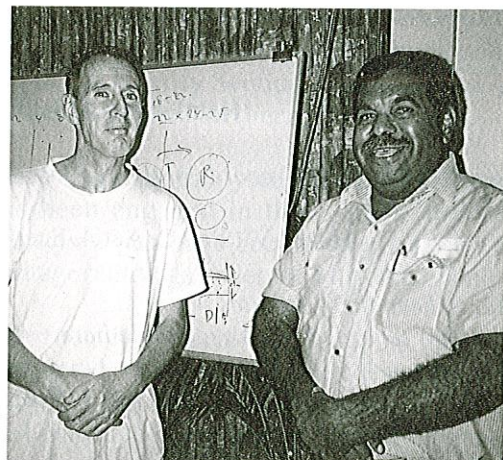


L-R: Barbara James and Francis Good (Photo courtesy of Helen Wilson)

Saturday saw a full day of workshops presented by Ronda and Francis on the practicalities and techniques of interviewing, recording and transcription. Among the issues covered were ethics, copyright, computer technology, maintenance of equipment and tape preservation. In addition, Ronda spoke about her Churchill Fellowship tour of North American, New Zealand and United Kingdom oral history projects and collections.

The workshop also included concurrent sessions on interview structuring, using 'buzz groups' of participants to practice structuring techniques, and on an analysis and discussion of transcripts.

The event closed with an open session for participants to discuss and evaluate the whole programme. Most stayed for this and many positive comments were received. Aspects commended included the diversity of



L-R: David James and Bill Hume (Photo courtesy of Helen Wilson)



L-R: Peter D'Abbs and Harry Giese (Photo courtesy of Helen Wilson)

input, the informality and the opportunity to mingle at the on-site lunch on the second day. There was also strong support for further presentations by NTAS, particularly with emphasis on cross-cultural issues.

A similar presentation in Alice Springs, probably in September, is currently under active consideration.

Francis Good

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SHAKESPEARE - AS RECORDS MANAGER

*From the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records
All saws of books, all forms*

Hamlet, Act I, Scene 5

Away! Burn all the records of the realm.

Henry VI, Part 2, Act 4, Scene 7

*and to keep these statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here.*

Love's Labour Lost, Act 1, Scene 1

NT HISTORY AWARDS

The 1994 NT History Awards attracted 42 applications and at the time of publication of this newsletter we are awaiting the Minister's decision on the recommendations of the History Awards Committee.

What can be revealed about this year's Awards is that the standard of applications was very high. It was an unenviable task for the Committee to recommend awards totalling \$30,000 when over \$197,000 was sought in applications for funding.

The recipients of this year's Awards should be announced very soon. The results will be published in the next issue of *Records Territory*.

Turning back to the recipients of Awards and Grants in previous years, a few more manuscripts and books have been completed and lodged with the Archives and the State Library.

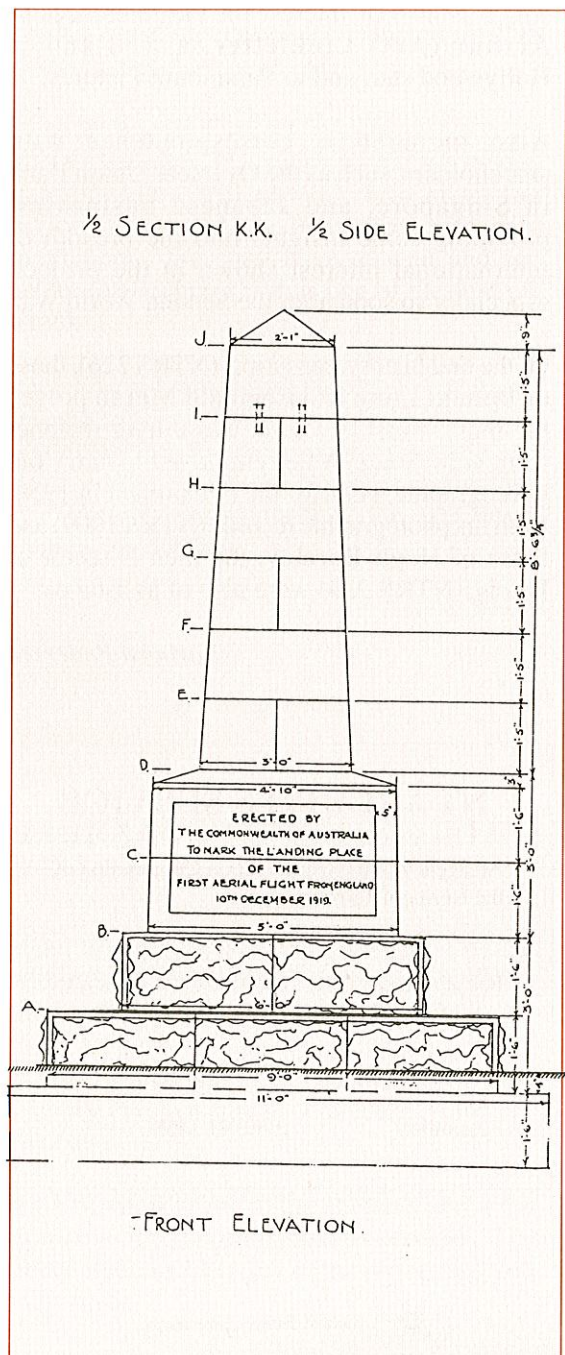
They include: **Tony Austin's** *I Can Picture The Old Home So Clearly - The Commonwealth and 'Half-Caste Youth in the Northern Territory 1911-1939*; **John Kadiba's** account of the Fijian Missionaries in Arnhem Land, 1916-1988; **Mickey Dewar's** work on the imaginative legacy of explorer **Ludwig Leichhardt**; **Fiona Darcy's** oral history work with noted Territorian **Sam Calder**; and **Helen Wilson's** *Historic Heart of Darwin*, a study of the early town allotments of Darwin.

Greg Coleman

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST ENGLAND-AUSTRALIA FLIGHT

On 10 December 1994 it will be 75 years since **Captain Ross** and **Lieutenant Keith Smith**, accompanied by **Sergeants J M Bennet** and **W H Shiers**, landed their war-surplus Vickers Vimy bomber on cleared ground above the cliffs at Fannie Bay to complete the first flight from England to Australia.

Their achievement won them national fame and a fortune; they received the prize of 10,000 pounds offered by the Commonwealth Government for the first successful flight from England, a distance of 11,060 miles which took them 21 days and 20 hours (135 hours actual flying time).



They also scored a monument in Darwin. This is located at the seaward end of Ross Smith Avenue, formerly the site of the landing strip that had been prepared for them by that other great aviator, **Hudson Fysh**, and which, until the 1930s, was still used by aviators flying into Darwin.

A recent research inquiry for architectural plans of the school at Batchelor led me to NTRS 73, Maps and Plans of Constructions in the Northern Territory, 1921-1979. The successful search yielded a bonus, revealing the existence of Plan No 515, titled 'Aviation Monument Port Darwin N.T.'. One of the more interesting features of the plan is reproduced here.

Keep this issue of *Records Territory* by you should you ever be visiting Darwin. This information is not included in the local tourist guides!

And if you are wondering why this item has been presented here, well, there are three reasons. Firstly, no former Archivist of the Royal Air Force Museum, London could go past such a find.

Secondly, if it isn't mentioned now it is likely to be submerged in the tidal wave of 20th anniversary commemorations of Cyclone Tracy in December this year.

And thirdly? Thirdly, empty pages do not look good and editors always ensure that they have enough copy!

Don Brech

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ARCHIVES USERS REPORTS

From the History Section, Museum and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory.

Since February this year, the History Section has been engaged in three major research projects which have been concerned with the heritage buildings under the Museum's control.

The first, for which a draft report has been completed, concerned the Residency in Alice Springs. The Residency was built in 1927 as the home of the Central Australian Government Resident, **John Cawood**, after the administration of the Northern Territory was split between North Australia and Central Australia in 1926.

The experiment did not last long and the North Australia Act was repealed in 1931. The building continued to be used by the Assistant Administrator, **Vic Carrington**, and during the Second World War was the residence of the Northern Territory Administrator **CLA Abbott**, who had been compelled to leave Darwin.

After the War the building was occupied by a variety of District Officers and eventually passed under the control of the Museum in 1973.

As well as the Oral History program which had recorded interviews with **Stan Cawood**, the son of the first Central Australian Resident, the Northern Territory Archives also houses a considerable collection of photographic material relating to the building and the early town of Alice Springs.

The draft report for this project is now being circulated and a final copy will be lodged at the Archives at completion of the project.

The two other research projects concern Darwin buildings. I am currently undertaking research at the Archives into the history and significance of BAT [British Australia Telegraph Company] House on the Esplanade and the building complex at Fannie Bay Gaol.

The Oral History material has proved a good resource for both and the original journals, log books and visitors books of the Gaol have been an invaluable resource for looking at the way the institution and the architecture operated.

Both these reports are due to be circulated in draft form by the middle of the year. Copies of the final reports will also be deposited with the Archives.

Dr Mickey Dewar

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From the Heritage Unit, Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory

Unlike in some other professional areas, such as archaeology, botany and geology, the historian's fieldwork is not undertaken in the open air but in archives and libraries, which house the main primary sources for the historian.

In recent months my research for heritage nominations under the Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act and the historic displays at the Beatrice Hill Visitor Centre south of Darwin has involved major research at the Archives.

For much of the work, the personal archival records and oral history transcripts provide an invaluable source of information that is unavailable in official reports and government records. This was especially so for the Beatrice Hill research, the main focus of which was the Northern Territory Rice Project.

This was a major agricultural undertaking in the mid 1950s and 1960s. Although it had the sympathy and verbal support of the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Administration, it was financed by private interests, a majority of which were American-based.

The records of **Sir William Gunn** relating to Territory Rice Limited (NTRS 814) were particularly useful. Gunn was one of the managing directors in Australia. It contains correspondence with the American backers which is also of interest for the references to **Arthur (Art) Linkletter**, a well-known Hollywood star, and to Paramount Pictures.

Also included is correspondence with shareholders, such as the Overseas Union Bank in Singapore, and Japanese businesses, providing some insights into the breadth of international interest shown in the project, especially so soon after the Second World War.

Of the oral history transcripts (NTRS 226), those of **Donald Lunn** and **Reginald Marsh** proved the most valuable. Lunn was a hydrographer from New South Wales employed to carry out hydrographic work for the rice project in 1954. Both his photographic records (NTRS 1009) and those of **Hugh Barclay**, the then Director of Lands, (NTRS 234) were also of assistance.

Barbara Pedersen

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