

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Arriving into a position two weeks from a Newsletter deadline and being given the job as editor is not a good position to be in. Nevertheless, one has to see this as a challenge and trust that style and expectations synergise in the very early stages of the job. The *Records Territory* has an excellent reputation as a professionally produced newsletter and I feel privileged to be part of its continuing creation.

In addition, there is a sense of fragmentation which is brought about by "that time of the year" — being Christmas, staff away on leave and the aftermath of the "great move" (which took place prior to my arrival) and the settling in period. But, we do not panic or become upset, just simply get on with the job — even when those big monitor lizards prowl around the area just outside your office window.

Records Territory is not the vehicle to document my personal impressions of Darwin. It is many years since I last lived here and of course much has changed, however, I feel sure I will enjoy being back and look forward to experiencing Darwin today.

News and happening in the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) will still feature in this publication and clients will be kept up to date with our progress. We propose to make preservation issues a regular column in future editions, building on the two articles previously published. Please let us know if you have any special interest in this area, or any other.

Diane Foster



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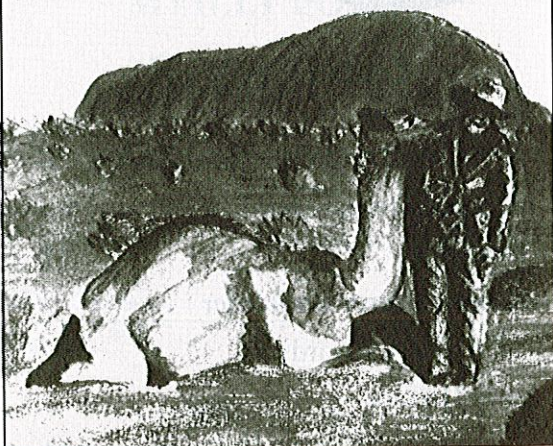
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NT HISTORY AWARDS

In the last edition of *Records Territory* we listed the recipients of the 1994 NT History Awards. In 1994 there were 19 Awards, and several recipients from out of town have visited NTAS since July to discuss and research their projects. They have included Graham McKenzie-Smith from Canberra, Jon Faine from Melbourne, Baiba Berzins from Sydney, Pat Forster from Alice Springs and Phil Costigan from Port Keats.

The most recently published work which has received assistance from the History Awards Program is Max Cartwright's *From Bush Tracks to Highway*, An account of the history of the South-Western regions of Central Australia.

FROM BUSH TRACKS TO HIGHWAY MAX CARTWRIGHT



Other recently deposited works which received assistance from the program in 1993 include Helen Wilson's history of the Darwin town allotments around the Civic Centre area, *The Historic Heart of Darwin* and Margaret Clinch's *Outline Maritime History of the Northern Territory*.

Another former History Award recipient, Diana Giese, is launching her book *Beyond China Town* on the 17th January in Darwin. Diana's tribute to the success of the Chinese population in Darwin will be available from Darwin bookshops and the National Library in Canberra.

For those interested in the History Awards for 1995, it is anticipated that requests for applications will be advertised in Territory newspapers and *The Weekend Australian* in early March. Awards will be allocated in July.

A leaflet about the Awards is available at NTAS, and any inquiries are most welcome.

Greg Coleman



* * *

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Over the past few months the public Search room has been rather busy, particularly after the temporary closure for relocation to Myilly Point. Here are some of the projects recently or currently underway:

- * *History of the eastern Barkly Tablelands*

Robyn Liddle

- * *History of Local Government in Katherine*

Bob Pitt

- * *Documentary script about the Chinese in the NT*

Ming Zhou

- * *Cyclone Tracy commemorative research*

John Antella

- * *Indexing of Anthony Lagoon Police Records*

Len Cossons

- * *Biography of Sarah Feeney*

Elizabeth Roberts

- * *Outback Police History*

Christine Stevens

- * *Biography of Thelma (Ma) Hawkes*

Jon Faine

- * *History of Tourism in the NT*

Baiba Berzins

- * *History of the Australian Army in the NT*

Graham McKenzie-Smith

- * *Documentary research about Darwin's social history and the legacy of the Buffaloes Football Club*

Melissa Hasluck, Des Raymond & Paul Roberts

- * *Contact History of the Gulf of Carpentaria*

John Avery

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EVENTS ACROSS THE BORDER

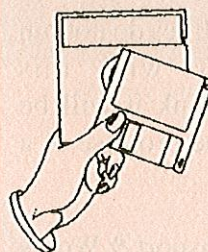
In September the Principal Archivist, Greg Coleman, presented a paper at the annual national convention of the Records Management Association of Australia in Adelaide. The paper looked at records management in the Territory in general terms since self-government and focused on current records management initiatives being considered by the NT Government.

Greg also attended a meeting of the Council of Federal, State and Territory Archives (COFSTA) in Perth in early December. The major agenda items included establishment of an *Archives of Australia* server facility on the Aarnet, shared standards for archives and records management policies, treatment of official records relating to Aboriginal peoples, national archival statistics and recovery of estrayed records.

On the electronic records front, the successful conference *Playing For Keeps*, hosted by Australian Archives



in Canberra in November, was attended by Records Services Archivist, Linda Bell, and Diane Foster (our new recruit) attended seminars/workshops at Monash University in Melbourne on her way to commence duties with us in Darwin in November.



Linda and Diane would be pleased to discuss with anyone interested in the issues which were addressed at these conferences and work-shops etc.

ARCHIVES CONFERENCE FOR THE ALICE

It was recently agreed by the Australian Society of Archivists that its annual conference in 1996 will be held at Alice Springs.



Plans are well under way and it promises to be BIG, so pencil it into your diary.

Contact Greg Coleman for details. We have some speakers lined up and would welcome any further suggestions.



OUR FUTURE HOME?



As most of our readers will be aware, NTAS is currently operating from the Old Law Building at the Myilly Point Campus of the NT University.

This is a temporary arrangement which will probably continue throughout 1995.

Our operations and facilities do not run quite as efficiently with this arrangement but we think it will be worth enduring with the promise of a new building in sight.

The Department of Transport & Works is currently looking at several options

for our future headquarters and archives repository, and they all look very promising!

We hope to be able to announce a decision in the next newsletter.

STAFF NOTES

In November we welcomed **Diane Foster** to the position of Archivist (Records Policy). This position was recently vacated by Don Brech who has returned to Hong Kong.

Having lived in Darwin in the 1960's, Diane was lured back to the north from Perth. Diane is adjusting quickly to the demands of the wet season and her well-stacked in-tray.

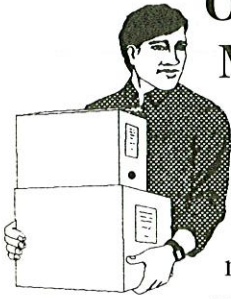


Diane — Archivist (Records Policy)

Our other recent starter is **Abimbola Adepoyibi**. Abi has taken a year's break from the Transport & Works Library to work as our Archivist (Information Services) while **Jenni Wright** is taking maternity leave. Abi has taken to the job like a duck to water.

And speaking of Jenni, we congratulate her and **Peter** on the birth of their second son (no name yet!) on 24th October.

ARCHIVES ON THE MOVE!



As all of our clients are aware (I Hope), we've moved! On 19 September we began moving our record holdings from the McMinn Street building to Australian Archives. The relocation of the records took just over one week, and the office was relocated to the old Law Faculty building of the Myilly Point Campus of the NT University.

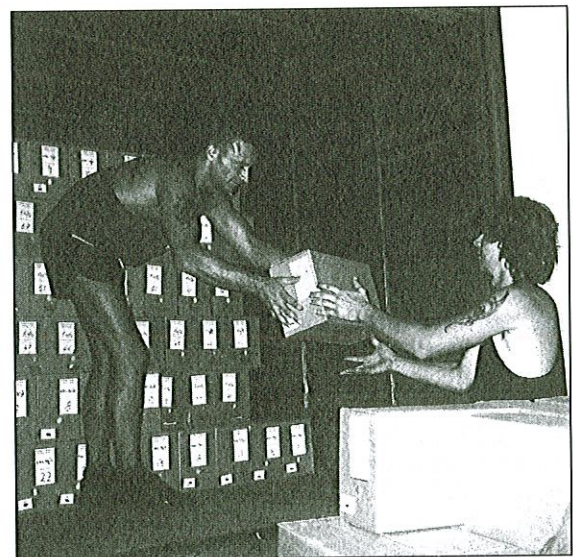
It was estimated that approximately 21,000 boxes (or 4,200 shelf metres) of records were required to be moved to Australian Archives for temporary storage until a new building could be found.

In the short time prior to the move, Neville and I took steps to minimise the damage to the fragile records which were to be moved. The records causing the most concern were the bound volumes of journals which dated back to the 1800's, and which could not be boxed due to their size. It was decided that the only option was to wrap the individual volumes to limit the amount of damage they would sustain.



Fragile records wrapped for protection

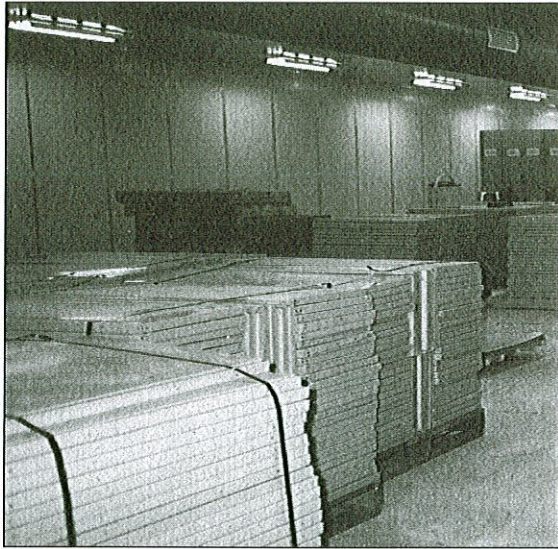
The move commenced early on Monday 19 September and unfortunately was not completed by the allotted deadline of the Friday afternoon. Another removal company was called in on the Monday of the following week to complete the job.



Moving company unloading records at Australian Archives



The records were all relocated at Australian Archives by Tuesday 27 September, and the compactus shelving was disassembled and removed to storage.



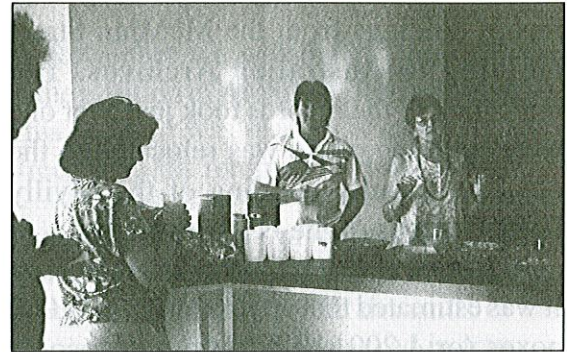
Compactus shelving being dismantled

The office furniture was relocated on 24 September to Myilly Point, and operations from the new office commenced on 26 September.



The Northern Territory Archives Service sign being removed from the McMinn Street building

A wake was held at the McMinn Street building on 29 September to say goodbye to the first archives Building Northern Territory Archives Service had known. Staff were suitably appreciative of the opportunity to let their hair down and shake off some of the stress from the move.



Francis Good, Pauline Schindler, Neville Horrocks and Sue Harlow enjoying the Northern Territory Archives Service wake

At Australian Archives, Neville Horrocks was responsible for the storage of the newly moved records. Although government departments were being warned about any delays in retrieval, the Lending Service continued to operate from our new premises at Myilly Point.

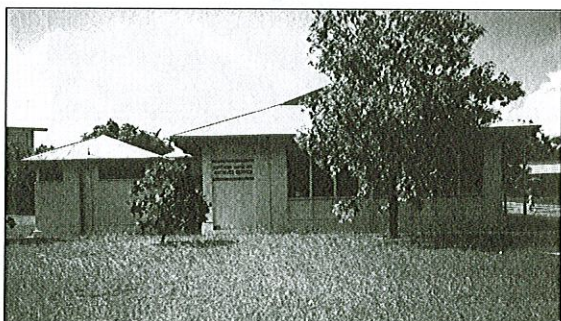


Neville and movers arranging pallets of records at Australian Archives

It took us approximately two weeks to completely gain control of the records that had been moved (involving the listing of all of the records which had been relocated). We can now say that we can locate almost all of the records that were moved.



Our new premises at Myilly Point are smaller than the McMinn Street building, and we are not in the same building as any of our records. But we have settled in and we will be here until a new building is made available.



Myilly Point Office

Researchers have had only two weeks interruption to service, and although we had some hiccups after the move in locating some records, these have been ironed out, and the Search Room is fully operational. Any delays we now have are due to the retrieval time for records which are now stored off-site. We would like to thank our clients (both government and general public) who have been patient during this traumatic experience.

Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)



Staff at the Myilly Point Office - left to right: Diane Foster, Linda Bell, Francis Good, Sue Harlow, Chris Spencer

DISASTER RECOVERY

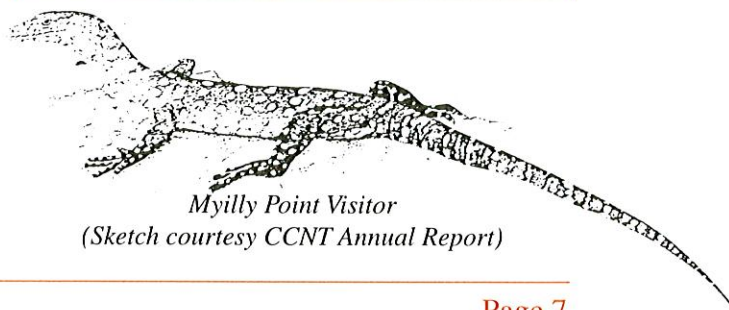
A *Disaster Preparedness Policy* is a vital document in any organization. But, for archivists, dealing with the documentary heritage of a state, territory or nation, the recovery stage is most crucial to how much of that heritage is saved.

I am in the process of identifying possible freezer space, suitable and large numbers of milk crates, or similar, fans and a host of other odd equipment which play a major role in recovery. Such ordinary items are used in conjunction with the various specialty products used in preservation/conservation.

Books, paper, glossy paper, magnetic tapes, disks, photographs (black and white and colour) all require different consideration and treatment.

Perhaps some of the above items have already been located by other agencies. If so, shared knowledge would be appreciated.

Diane Foster



*Myilly Point Visitor
(Sketch courtesy CCNT Annual Report)*



ORAL HISTORY LOOKING BACK ON 1994

1994 was a very satisfactory year for all personnel and consultants involved in the work of the Northern Territory Archives Service's Oral History Unit. Following are some figures and highlights for the year.

STATISTICS

There were 113 new reels of tape added to the collection in 1994, which represents 85 recorded hours for 56 separate interviews. Most of these were standard analog cassette tapes, familiar to domestic users for many years now, but thanks to capital item funding provided by the Conservation Commission for 1994/95, the new reels included 22 on digital audio tape (DAT), which from now on will be used for the majority of interview recordings. DAT requires a bit more recording expertise than the familiar analog cassettes, but provides excellent quality, allows much better interface with modern computer-based sound media, flawless copying, and time coding which can be used, for example, to very quickly and accurately locate segments of the recording. As an added service to users,

time coding data will also be included in the transcripts for interviews recorded on DAT.

Finalised transcripts were lodged in 1994 for 44 interviews. These represented 92 recorded hours, and comprised 737,470 words in all. The amount of work involved in these transcripts came to 910 hours of transcription and proofreading. Whilst most of this was completed during 1993 and 1994 by Archives' transcriber **Pauline Schindler**, about 20% of this time was required for proofreading by **Francis Good**. These figures are in addition to the proofreading of transcripts compiled by the unit for private researchers, who check their own material, and approximately 200 hours of work by **Sue Harlow**, who presently compiles the detailed content listings and summaries of nearly all transcripts lodged.



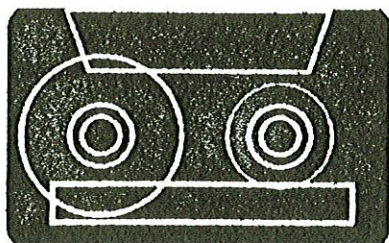
Francis Good - Archivist (Oral Records)

CONTENT

This year was the first when significant contributions came into the Archives' collection from independent researchers. Whilst the majority of interviews were still recorded by Archives or its consultant contractors, the Oral History Unit now offers researchers who record interviews for their own projects the service of compiling transcripts, provided that the material is suitable for collection, and both tapes and transcripts are lodged in our collections for the use of Archives client researchers in perpetuity.

Transcripts compiled by the Unit which were lodged in 1994 included the following non-Archives projects which enhanced the collection. Two were: a series of interviews by **Janet Dickinson** with World War Two evacuees from Darwin; and 12 interviews recorded with students by a group of consultants for the Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program. The Historical Society of the Northern Territory is to publish a report on the evacuees study, and the student material was extensively used in a book published by the Education Department late in the year: *You Don't Get Degrees in Weet-Bix Boxes: True Stories of Aboriginal People in Tertiary Study and Beyond*.

Other finalised transcripts from outside researchers included 7 from an ongoing series of interviews by **David Hugo** for his research with Italian mica miners in Central Australia in the 1930s to the



1960s; and three on Territory gaols history from the Curator of Northern Territory History at the NT Museum, **Dr Mickey Dewar**. Tapes in the pipeline (recorded in 1994 and due for final transcript lodgement in 1995) include: interviews with former Croker Island residents recorded by **Dr Tony Austin**; several from **Pat Forster** about Aboriginal ex-service personnel in the Centre; and a series on Local Government in Katherine from **Robert Pitt**.



Dr Mickey Dewar, NT Museum

Among interviews recorded by Archives, 1994 saw lodgement of the transcript of one of the longest ever recorded by the Oral History Unit, a 39-tape interview (begun by **Dr Peter d'Abbs** and completed by **Francis Good**) with **Harry Giese**, a former Director of Welfare, and the longest serving member of the Northern Territory Legislative Council. The 32-hour interview, with a transcript (including summary and content listing) containing 242,000 words, covers a wide range of administrative, political and social issues. The interviewee's written permission is required for use.



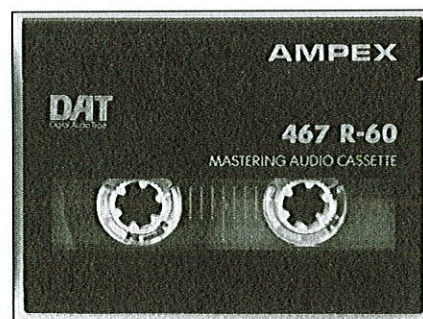
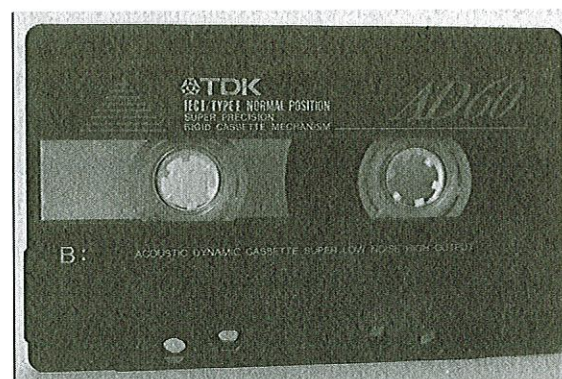
Oral History Project

Transcripts for two other Archives interviews with important administrative figures were also finalised in 1994. These were, firstly, **Roger L. Dean, C.B.E., Kt.S.J.**, a Federal MP who first saw the Territory as a gunnery officer in Darwin during the war, later headed the Parliamentary Committee investigating the grievances of Yirrkala Aborigines presented in a bark petition to the Commonwealth Parliament in the 1960s, and also held the post of Northern Territory Administrator from 1964 to 1970, a period of significant growth and change in the Territory.

The other was an interview with **George Redmond**, who was the Director of Works for the Commonwealth in the Territory from 1962 to 1977, who provides a very detailed account of the works and housing projects mounted throughout the Territory during this period of substantial development. Both interviews were recorded by **Dr F.H. (Slim) Bauer**, a former Director of the Australian National University's North Australia Research Unit in Darwin.

The 91/2-hour interview with Mr Dean comprises 12 tapes and a transcript of 65,000 words, and the interview with Mr Redmond, also just on 91/2 hours, comprises 13 tapes and 60,000 words of transcript. Both interviews are available for research use without restriction.

Our regular readers will recall that the Oral History Unit mounted a very successful seminar and workshops in Darwin in April. Other notable events for 1994 included the use of interview sound bites in the Australian Archives national touring exhibition *Between Two Worlds*, centred on the experience of Territory people removed from the custody of their Aboriginal parents by the authorities. Short extracts of archives interviews were also provided to the Northern Territory Museum's new standing exhibition on Cyclone Tracy, which opened in November.



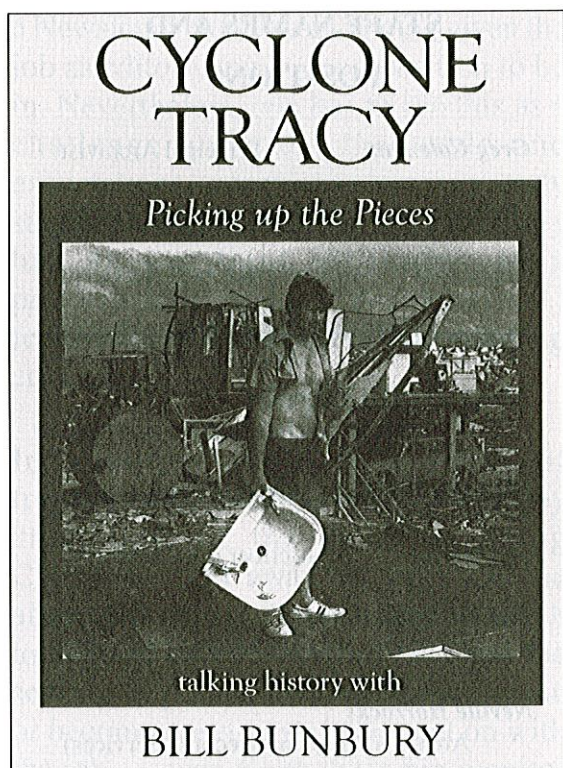
The smaller DAT cassette holds more information than the familiar old analog cassette

The use of DAT recording has been invaluable for this, as was the computer-based sound-editing facility which was purchased from capital item funds provided by the Conservation Commission in 1993/94, and which was used by Francis Good to edit and mix the interview extracts. Some Archives interview extracts were also used by the ABC's Bill Bunbury in his recent book *Cyclone Tracy: Picking Up the Pieces*, published by Fremantle Arts Press. Numerous extracts of Archives interviews have also appeared in several articles on the cyclone in the interstate press, including the *Weekend Australian*, which also included an article on the work of the unit on this topic in its edition of 17-18 December.

in the 1930s, and four with two couples who lived and worked in Aboriginal communities from the 1950s, **Mick and Audrey Ivory**, and **Arnold and Betty Probin**. Other Centralian interviews to look forward to, recorded in 1994 and due for transcript lodgement in 1995, will be one with **Bob Darken**, former Territory mounted policeman, pastoralist, park ranger and wildlife officer, and others recorded with a diverse group of Tennant Creek interviewees.

Francis Good
December 1994

* * *



Among the transcripts lodged for Archives interviews in 1994, interviews on Cyclone Tracy were again numerous, and included several with people who never returned to Darwin afterwards, the most interesting being recorded in Perth by **Gail O'Hanlon**. Tapes collected in 1994 from field trips by **Francis Good** will also yield transcripts next year on the work done for cyclone evacuees in towns down the track. Other transcripts lodged for interviews by Francis included several recorded in Alice Springs, one with a Catholic missionary, **Brother Edward Bennett**, whose work in the Territory began



Bob Darken - Darwin Police Barracks, 1940. A bomb blast blew Bob under a tank stand to the right of the building during a Japanese air raid on 19 Feb., 1942. (photo: Darken collection NTRS 1811)

STAFF GREETINGS

PRESERVATION WORKSHOPS

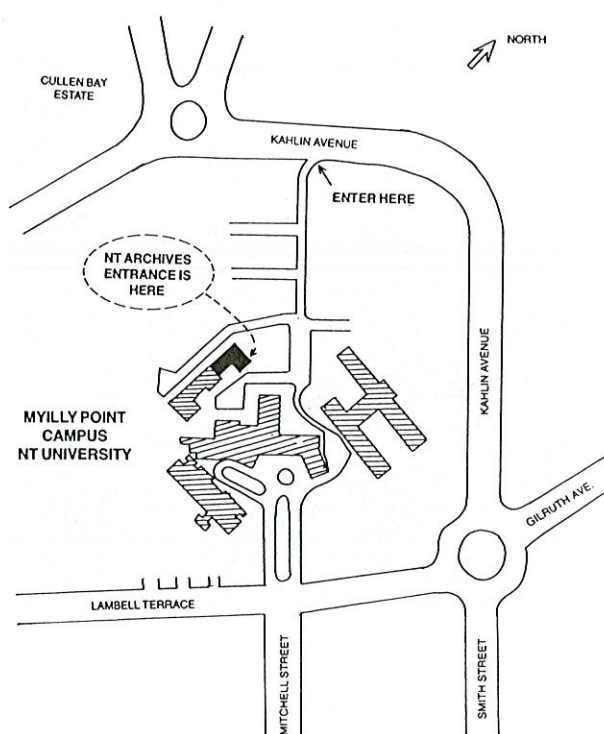
A Conservation Skills Workshop on Paper and Photographs is to be held on the weekend of March 11th and 12th. This is a joint venture between the Australian Museum, Sydney and the Museum & Art Galleries of the NT and supported by the Heritage Collections Committee (Commonwealth Department of Communications & the Arts).

The workshop objectives are basic preservation issues and will be suitable for anyone interested in preserving paper based documents, photographs and display. Emphasis will be on practical and inexpensive solutions to problems.

Two other workshops focussing on general collections in Libraries will be held in Alice Springs and Katherine.

Contacts for further information are: Kerry Head, Sandra Yee (089) 89 8237 or Fax (089) 89 8289.

NEW LOCATION MYILLY POINT



*We wish all our
Clients, Colleagues and
Friends
a Prosperous and
Happy New Year*

STAFF NAMES AND POSITIONS

<i>Greg Coleman</i>	Principal Archivist
<i>Diane Foster</i>	Archivist (Records Policy)
<i>Linda Bell</i>	Archivist (Records Services)
<i>Francis Good</i>	Archivist (Oral Records)
<i>Abimbola (Abi) Adeyoyibi</i>	Archivist (Information Services)
<i>Maureen Wilkins</i>	Administration Officer
<i>Sue Harlow</i>	Transcriber (Oral Records)
<i>Pauline Schindler</i>	Transcriber (Oral Records)
<i>Neville Horrocks</i>	Archives Assistant (Records Services)
<i>Chris Spicer</i>	Storeman/Courier (Records Services)

NT ARCHIVES SERVICE

An agency of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

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