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This being my first editorial as IASA's editor, I'm a little lost for how to begin. Having spent the last 3 to 4 months coming to grips with the various tasks involved I've been struck by how effortless and seamless our past editor, Ilse Assmann, has made it all seem. She has worked tirelessly over the past 6 years to produce journals, information bulletins, e-Bulletins, and special publications, and to keep the website up to date - with clear processes and methods set up to juggle it all. I'm at once very impressed at all she's achieved, and very apprehensive about how I'm going to follow in her shoes. I can only say I'm excited about doing my best.

The IASA Journal has been handed over to me in excellent shape. It looks great, with a clear branded design that carries through to all IASA publications, and I don't see any reason for changing it at this stage. If there's any development to be done, I believe it may be towards a stand alone, peer reviewed journal that will present more of a mix of new work together with conference presentations. As we've developed the website to accommodate more of the conference proceedings I believe the journal offers us an opportunity to share ideas in greater depth. This may also allow us the opportunity to develop themed issues that would allow wide exploration of concerns from a range of perspectives.

To this end, for this current issue I've tried to gather papers, mainly from the IASA 2008 conference in Sydney, that have a common focus on archival projects working somehow in collaboration with communities.

Some of you may have come across the story of the "Biblioburro", a mobile library run by Luis Soriano and his two donkeys (Alfa and Beto) in the mountain villages of northern Colombia. (If not, read the story in a report in the New York Times at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/20/world/americas/20burro.html?_r=2&emc=eta1). Mr Soriano, a primary school teacher from La Gloria, now has some 4800 books, a selection of which he packs onto the backs of Alfa and Beto and heads for the hills. He stops in small village communities to lend to those who are able to read for themselves, and to read to those who are not. Mr Soriano created the Biblioburro out of the simple belief that the act of taking books to people who do not have them can somehow improve this impoverished region, and perhaps Colombia as a whole. The story struck me as I was thinking about a theme for this editorial. It made connections for me with one of the main themes of the 2008 conference in Sydney last September: that of community engagement - the concept that "no archive is an island" and collections only really take on meaning when they can be accessed, appreciated and learnt from - and that the "hard to reach" communities must also form part of our planning.

If there is a theme for this issue of the journal, therefore, then this is it. The papers take a range of stances and approaches to connecting with communities. The opening addresses of Chris Puplick (Australian National Film and Sound Archive) and Jan Lyall (UNESCO Memory of the World programme) draw our attention to the importance of the record of indigenous and original people. Jan uses the example of the phenomenal skill and knowledge bound up in traditional navigational methods as generations of Satawalese navigate between islands in Micronesia - all committed to memory and expressed in songs and other forms of oral tradition. She stresses the "urgent need" to record and ensure the survival of such cultural heritage. One of the important facts she raises is that it's not only outsiders who need this information (and may have access in cyberspace) but the Satawalese themselves, lest the knowledge should die taking with it a major part of Satawalese cultural history and identity. She and all the remaining papers in this issue taken from the conference explore



models for achieving this. International programmes and conventions, software applications, internet browsers and social networking systems, physical repatriation into local or regional repositories, information systems, and local recording projects all assist us in our “social responsibilities” (Richard Moyle) to make collections accessible. To add to the mix we might take a leaf out of Mr Soriano’s book and buy a couple of donkeys!

Chris Puplick, while highlighting the importance of the “record of indigenous and original people”, also reminds us of the sensitivities attached to working with such cultural heritage. So as we embark on our various dissemination activities we should be mindful of the ethical issues that must underlie all our efforts as “archivists and academics and ‘keepers’ of the material” (Rob Perks).

The final two articles in the journal were not presented at the Sydney conference. They do remind us though that if we are to have any sound documents to disseminate, we must have the equipment and technical know-how to record them and to preserve them. Christian Liebl’s paper on the Telegraphone takes us back to 12 October 1901, the day on which the voice of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria was recorded on arguably the first magnetic recording ever to have been made. By contrast, Nigel Bewley’s report on the Sound Archive Project brings us clearly into the 21st Century describing how the Surface Scanning of Archived Sound Recordings project has managed to successfully transfer a 130 year-old Edison tinfoil phonograph.

Finally, Albrecht Häfner’s review of Engel, Kuper and Bell’s book (*Zeitschichten: Magnetbandtechnik als Kulturträger. Erfinder-Biographien und Erfindungen*) is a helpful synopsis in English of the “historical development of magnetic storage technology and magnetic tape in particular”.

I do hope you’ll all find these papers thought-provoking and of interest.

[Technical note: a few of the images presented are web screenshots and high resolution versions for print publication were not available.]

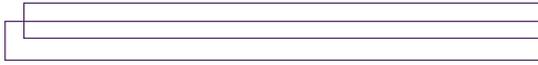
I am both pleased and honoured to be taking on the Presidency of IASA at this time; there are so many important projects and plans being carried through by our members that are poised ready to go, that I believe through its ongoing work, IASA will be making an even bigger contribution to the sound and audio visual archiving community. The generosity of the IASA membership is notable. An outside observer to our Sydney 2008 conference commented that our IASA conference was unlike any other they had seen because we were prepared to share unreservedly so that others can benefit from the cooperation.

There is a conundrum known as “the prisoners’ dilemma” which describes a scenario in which two people have much to lose and much to gain. The choices they make affect their own fortunes, but in the long run the best result for the individual is gained by cooperating and achieving the best benefits for all. The 2008 conference theme of “No Archive is an Island” pointed at our critical interdependence, “no archive is an island complete of itself”, as we were reminded at this conference, any loss reflects on us all, and likewise, any interconnection is the responsibility of us all. In this time of interconnection there are so many possibilities for us to find ways to work together, the possibilities for IASA have increased, and so have our responsibilities. I think IASA’s members understand very clearly the benefits of working for the general good.

This was clearly the case in September, for the sun had barely set on the Sydney conference when the newly elected IASA Executive Board, fired with enthusiasm, began talking to the even more energetic planners for our next conference which is to be held in Athens. “Towards a New Kind of Archive? The digital philosophy in audiovisual archives” is the theme and there promises to be many exciting issues to be examined. By the time you read this you will no doubt have seen the call for papers and be thinking about the presentation you will be making. The large number of excellent and varied paper proposals we have been receiving for the IASA conferences in the past few years make for very rich conferences, and I encourage you all to apply the same sharing attitude and creative thinking to our 2009 conference.

As well as the conference we have IASA publications. Near to my heart, and now near to completion, is the second edition of IASA TC-04, “Guidelines in the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects”, which is now ready to be published. The new edition TC-04 not only informs readers about developments in digitisation processes since it was first published five years ago, but is expanded with current information on important topics such as metadata, guidance on naming and numbering of files and digital works, preservation target formats and systems structured around the OAIS model, and a discussion of partnerships, project planning and outsourcing. There is also a chapter on preservation and field recording technology and approaches. There are more than 140 pages, up from the 80 pages of the first edition, of authoritative information on the world of audio preservation. Its new form and new information is entirely due to the hard work of the IASA technical committee who have tirelessly updated and proof read the content. IASA has received a number of generous offers of sponsorship and support, and we hope to launch the new edition in March.

Thanks to the efforts of the Research Archives section a draft of Professional Ethical Principles for IASA is currently circulating amongst sections and committees and general members. Though we have “IASA TC-03 The Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy” to guide us in matters regarding the ethics of managing



the technology of sound preservation, there has been a need for us to codify the underlying ethical principles that inform our practice as sound and audio visual archivists. The current discussion moves us ever closer to making this document widely available for IASA members, and to inform others about our standards.

Training is one of IASA's major responsibilities, and the training committee's agenda and planned meetings point to some new developments in this area too. IASA has had a research grant in place for some time, but it has become inactive over time and the IASA board will be looking at how to make this active in the near future. And these are only some of the things that are in train; the agenda for us is, if not full, certainly extensive. We look forward to reviewing these and all our other plans in the mid year board meeting in March.

The reason it is such a pleasure to take on the IASA presidency at this time is that the transfer from the old board to the new has been so smoothly managed that there is little or no loss in momentum on these and other important projects. My grateful thanks go to the outgoing IASA executive board for the past three years' work, and the support of the new board. Special acknowledgement should go to Past President Richard Green, whose time at the helm has been marked by many successes and whose involvement in the new board will be much valued, and to Gunnel Jönsson, who as Secretary-General has been the navigator for IASA over the past two terms. Thanks also to Per Holst, whose tireless work in recent years as the IASA board's representative for conferences has helped to shape some memorable events, and to Kurt Deggeller, whose time as President and Past President has come to an end, but whose important connection with IASA will continue.

The new IASA executive includes Ilse Assmann as Secretary General, returning again after a successful time as editor; Pio Pellizzari as Vice President and convener of the training committee, Jacqueline Von Arb as Vice President for membership, and Richard Green returning in the role of Past President. New to the IASA executive is Janet Topp Fargion, from the British Library who has shouldered the task of editor; Lidia Camacho, from the Fonoteca Nacional in México, Vice President with responsibility for membership in the Americas and for conferences, and myself, from the National Library of Australia. We all anticipate working hard for a forward looking IASA.

Kevin Bradley
Canberra, Australia
December 2008

The Contributions of Custodians: Welcoming Remarks and IASA 2009 Conference Launch

Chris Puplick AM, Australian National Film and Sound Archive, Australia

Presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia

I am pleased as Chair of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia an active member of IASA since 1984 - to welcome you back to Australia and to Sydney in particular.

Australians have always valued the opportunity for international co-operation and participation: and I am pleased to acknowledge the leadership role of Kevin Bradley (your incoming President), my NFSA Board colleague Grace Koch, my archive mentor Ray Edmondson and others such as Peter Burgis, John Spence, James McCarthy and Matthew Davies who have made significant contributions to IASA.

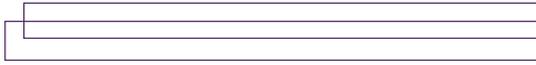
IASA itself has blossomed since its foundation in 1969 – growing out of the International Association of Music Libraries - to become a truly world-wide organisation with members in more than 60 countries and I congratulate you on that achievement.

You have an interesting and varied programme ahead of you over the next few days – one which I am sure will stimulate and lead to further insights. The work of your Cataloguing, Discography, Technical, National Archive, Radio Sound Archive and Research Archive subcommittees will keep you all busy and in many ways are the foundations of work from which we derive so much benefit from the sharing of experiences.

As you know Australia has an exceptional history in terms of its own audiovisual archives. We are one of the few countries that can say that our own political history as a federated nation is comprehensively captured on film. Our films of the 1896 Melbourne Cup and the Manly ferry (both still running!) predate our Federation. We have moving images of all of our Prime Ministers and sound recordings of all but (I think) four of them.

Again, as I am sure you know our film industry was in many ways the world's pioneer. The 1900 Salvation Army slide show/film *Soldiers of the Cross* developed an existing technology but the 1906 *Kelly Gang* was truly the world's first feature film. I hope that many of you will be able to get copies of the marvellous reconstruction and presentation of this epic recently issued by the NFSA – the first of a series which we are planning related to our historic silent era.

I am also immensely proud of the work of both the NFSA and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in collecting and preserving so much of the record of our indigenous and original peoples. The capture of this history is vital, not only for its own intrinsic worth but equally for what it can tell us about so much that has been lost or is threatened and why this is so important for our collective indigenous and European futures. Managing this material is a matter of the utmost cultural sensitivity and I hope that through IASA we can learn more about the experiences of managing other unique indigenous collections. At the NFSA I am also immensely proud of our programme which repatriates copies of very old, rare and often sensitive/sacred material recorded in the 1920s and 1930s, usually by anthropologists or ethnographers (of course without the proper consent of the Indigenous people concerned) to their original communities. In this process we enhance



trust and dialogue with those communities, and they share with us much information which is uniquely valuable about the material in our collection.

Similarly our unique records of what our country once looked like: its rivers and its forests, its cities and its landscapes, its flora and fauna, are now vital markers against which we have an enhanced capacity to face the challenges of climate change, land degradation, urbanisation and social planning. We need to see what we have destroyed if we are to have any chance of restoration – and where will we find that but in our audiovisual archives?

Australian Governments have always recognised the importance of our audiovisual archive and the current NFSA is the descendent of the original National Historic Film and Speaking Record Library established in 1935. They have been great supporters of our work, never more so than now.

One of the great joys of archival work is to find a new treasure – a sort of Indiana Jones moment – only non-violent and legal. Such a moment occurred for us in August when we discovered (in the UK) a March 1927 ten minute film of the Duke and Duchess of York arriving in Sydney to open our first national Parliament House in Canberra. This unique film shot by Walter Sully (for DeForest Phonofilms) is our earliest sound film and indeed captured sound on film four years before the Jazz Singer introduced the world to the “talkies”.

Similarly in our fabulous Corrick Collection (some 135 silent films of the early part of the last century) we recently came across a copy of the 1904 Living London a 40 minute film produced by Charles Urban, one of England’s major film pioneers. It will be a pleasure for us to have it screened in Trafalgar Square at the opening of the forthcoming London Film Festival.

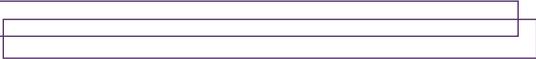
History is important – when George Santayana said that those who do not learn its lessons are condemned to repeat it he was right.

Two weeks ago today I walked along and stood at the end of an ordinary looking railway line. But this was no ordinary line; these were the train tracks into the Auschwitz/Birkenau extermination camps. What I saw there, felt there, experienced there is not capable of expression: there are no words of sufficient gravity.

Not everyone can visit such places – although everyone should. You can read about them in the history books or in the scarifying memoirs of Primo Levi or Imre Kertesz, but there is nothing like seeing the images. The archival films of this horror, this holocaust - kept safe and made available across the globe - are fundamental and vital to giving hope to the message on the walls of Auschwitz – NEVER AGAIN.

It is the audiovisual archives of the world which are the ultimate custodians of history, the keepers of truth and the repository of demonstrated values. That places on them – it places on us – a responsibility which is far greater than merely to be good at our jobs. It requires us to learn and to understand that the historical record of the past holds the key to the future.

It is no coincidence that George Orwell in 1984 reminded us that he who controls the present controls the past and he who controls the past controls the future. That is why, in the novel, Winston Smith’s job was to alter the past so as to pervert the future. We have a



responsibility to make sure that no such thing happens in our time, although many states have tried and no doubt many governments will.

When you chose as your theme “No Archive is an Island” you so clearly identified this grave responsibility. The loss of any archive diminishes us all because we are indeed involved in humanity. So let us strive to make sure that that fatal bell does not toll for any of us, but rather that it rings out, as bells should, a message of hope and comfort, of joy and celebration and of the dawning of a better tomorrow.

Through our shared and preserved past, our curated and accessible memories, our interpreted and understood records, our living sounds and images, we can ensure that we take from that past the flames of hope and progress and not just the ashes of despair and failure.

From Satawal to Cyberspace

Jan Lyall, *UNESCO Memory of the World Program*

Opening address presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia

I wish to commence by paying my respects to the Walangang and Gadigal people and their ancestors, the indigenous people of the land on which this museum is built.

It is a great honour to have been invited to deliver this opening address, but it is also somewhat of a daunting one as I have been away from the permanent workforce for nearly ten years. In addressing this impressive gathering of experts from around the world I had to ask myself “what did I learn in my years at the National Library of Australia and what have I learnt since that will enable me to offer you a few thoughts to set the scene for your deliberations over the next few days?”

While at the National Library of Australia (NLA) I managed its preservation program and Kevin Bradley, as head of the Sound Preservation and Technical Services area reported to me. During those years I developed a great admiration and respect for Kevin. I admired his:

- passion for the significance of the recorded sound,
- fierce determination to ensure that the NLA held a position at the forefront of technological developments,
- keen intelligence and
- ever increasing knowledge.

I congratulate him on his forthcoming role as your incoming president of IASA – I am certain that he will do a great job for you.

Very early on in our association Kevin alerted me to the many issues facing the NLA’s Oral History and Folklore collections. From the mid 1980s until the early 1990s I went into battle for him, arguing for the purchase of expensive equipment that many believed was unnecessary. There was a commonly held belief that the recorded sound collections were not mainstream and that there was no need to update the Library’s existing equipment. We fought and won that battle enabling the Library to move successfully from the analogue to the digital world. Kevin’s vast wealth of expertise is now an enormous asset to the Library. From those experiences I gained a good appreciation of the technological challenges of creating, preserving and providing access to recorded sound. I also learned of the many emotional and cultural sensitivities associated with interviewing a wide range of people. As a person who now conducts oral history interviews I am acutely aware of the value and role of the actual recording. I know the significance of:

- a silence
- a change in the tone of voice
- an expression of anger
- laughter
- tears

A transcript simply does not convey the same information.

My ongoing association with the UNESCO Memory of the World program has made me acutely aware of the digital divide between developed and developing countries. I am very conscious of the difficulties and challenges faced by developing countries in preserving and providing access to their cultural heritage. I believe that Pacific Island nations, particularly those that are remote and sparsely populated, face unique challenges.

As I began pondering on the title of this conference – No Archive is an Island – I asked myself “is this really a valid statement?” It implies that no archive is isolated and that everyone is able to navigate from one archive to another. This is obviously an ideal situation and one to which we should all aspire, but one which is only possible if every archive is able to capture, preserve and provide access to its national heritage. In today’s world this means creating digital information, placing it on the Internet and providing access to it. In reality, for you, the situation is even more complicated, since your primary interests are with sound and audiovisual materials. How is it possible to capture the full extent of everything that the terms “sound” and “audiovisual” embrace?

An examination of the program for this conference and a study of its abstracts demonstrated to me that in the coming days not only will you be presented with possible solutions to many of these problems, but you will have many opportunities to share your experiences. The breadth of topics covered within IASA is awesome and I will not attempt to summarise them here. Chris Puplick in his impressive welcome speech to delegates on Sunday evening achieved that task in a far more eloquent and comprehensive manner than I could manage.

In thinking further about “islands” I remembered reading a book many years ago called *A Song for Satawal* by Kenneth Brower¹ that described the traditional navigational methods used for thousands of years by the navigators from the island of Satawal, that is now part of the Federated States of Micronesia. Long before Columbus and Magellan, before Europeans had even dared to venture beyond the sight of land, seafaring Pacific nations had discovered and colonised islands in the vast expanses of the Pacific Ocean. These navigators used no mechanical aids but employed knowledge of the sun, stars, currents, waves, cloud formations, birds and marine life to sail several hundred miles from one tiny coral atoll to another. They relied on memory, assisted by songs, to navigate these often treacherous seas. However memory alone was not enough – many years of experience were required before they were qualified and recognised as navigators.

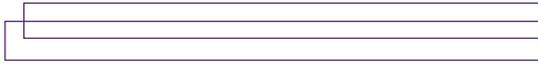
This book had made a huge impression on me and although my original copy had long since disappeared I decided to acquire another copy and to use the story of the traditional navigators from Micronesia as a metaphor for current day navigation between the archives of the world. These thoughts lead me to call my talk *From Satawal to Cyberspace*.

In the process of acquiring another copy of Kenneth Brower’s book from Amazon.com I became aware of another book on the same topic called *The Last Navigator* by Stephen Thomas², who after college spent several years as a professional yacht captain and navigator. He logged over 30,000 miles in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific. On one of his Pacific voyages he was introduced to a book called *We, the Navigators* by David Lewis³,

¹ Kenneth Brower, *A Song for Satawal*, New York, Harper and Row, 1983.

² Stephen D. Thomas, *The Last Navigator*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1987.

³ David Lewis, *We, the Navigators, The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific*, 2nd Ed. Sir Derek Oulton, Editor, University of Hawai’i Press, 1994.



a yachtsman and medical doctor, who had in the 1970s interviewed Micronesian navigators versed in the ancient navigational skills of their forefathers. Lewis documented these skills in his book. By the early 1980s the central Carolinian Islands, of which Satawal is one, were one of the few places remaining in the Pacific where these traditional skills were still practised.

Fascinated by these stories Stephen Thomas heard about a navigator from Satawal called Mau Piailug. Mau, as he was known, had become famous in the 1970s after his incredible 900 mile round trip voyage from Satawal to Saipan in a 27 foot outrigger sailing canoe. Following this in 1976 he made a further epic journey of 2,500 miles in Hokule'a, a replica of a Polynesian voyaging canoe from Maui to Tahiti. Again the voyage was made without charts or instruments. This voyage put him on the world scene after a documentary film was made about it by National Geographic.

In 1983 and 1984 Steve Thomas made field trips to Satawal where he hoped to meet Mau and to learn traditional navigational methods from him. Thomas achieved his goal but only because Mau was prepared to break with tradition and pass his knowledge on to "an outsider". In the process he learnt their language and acquired a family. Mau became the Last Navigator in Thomas's book of the same name.

Thanks to the existence of the Internet I quickly obtained a copy of each of the Brower and the Thomas books. I have used them to shape this presentation where I'll attempt to show that the introduction of modern day technology to societies based on oral traditions results in the creation of "islands of memory" that will disappear unless action is taken to capture and preserve that knowledge.

It was disturbing for me to learn that so many of the traditional Pacific Island boat building, navigational and seafaring skills had been lost over the last century. I was deeply moved by Stephen Thomas's statement that "on Satawal the 'talk of the sea' has been kept alive in the frail vessel of human memory, passed from father to son in a shining braid of talk"⁴. With the "modernisation" of navigation in Micronesia and the fact that it is no longer essential for the survival of the Satawalese to travel from one island to another, the message in his book is that this "talk of the sea" is unlikely to survive as an oral tradition and practice. It seems that the only way this knowledge can be preserved is by recording it in text or by making oral recordings.

This was done by Stephen Thomas but it is apparent that this is a poor substitute for the original knowledge since it is unlikely that the skills can be learnt from a study of these records. Years of sailing experience were necessary to develop skills as a navigator. On Satawal boys began their education at 5 or 6 years of age by learning the names of stars, and after much further training in all aspects of traditional navigation they may have been considered ready at 18 or 20 to take charge of a voyage on their own. It is interesting to note that the interest generated by the Polynesian voyage navigated by Mau has been a catalyst for a revival of these traditional practices and the formation of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. Several Polynesian voyages have been made since 1976, not all of which have been successful – one at least ending in tragedy.

⁴ Stephen D. Thomas, *The Last Navigator*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1987, 5.

I have used some of the hundreds of images, taken in 1983 and '84, and reproduced on Stephen Thomas's website⁵ to illustrate this presentation and here is one that demonstrates how a photograph is not really worth a thousand words, or songs – it leaves out more information than it contains.



Figure 1 - Dancers at Satawal Elementary School Graduation

This is a great photo – but

- does the ceremony have a particular significance?
- why are the girls such a strange colour?
- what are they singing?
- are the dancers accompanied by musical instruments?
- if so what are they, how many are there? how are they made and what do they sound like?

Without that sort of detailed text and sound documentation it is little more than a pretty picture. To be fair, some of this information is provided in his book. For example, the strange skin colour is due to the application of turmeric which was used to make the skin lighter, but is this the true reason? and if so why is it desirable? Undoubtedly additional information would be available in Thomas's extensive collection of materials, ranging from unpublished papers, audiovisual and photographic materials, to slides and oral history transcripts that he donated to the University of Hawai'i. Information is also available in a different format from the website of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology⁶. It is to be hoped that much of the oral history he recorded while on Satawal is now in the public domain. I could not however discover any means of accessing it.

⁵ Steve Thomas Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection <http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/satawal/index.php>

⁶ University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Navigation/Misc/contents.html>

In today's technological age, we all depend increasingly on modern means of communication to obtain information. However, if this access is unavailable, the people so denied will be as ignorant of this information as the present day young men of many Pacific islands are of their traditional navigational skills.

As a general rule few people have much knowledge of Pacific Island Countries. We only hear about them when disaster strikes; for example when there is political upheaval or when a cyclone hits, or maybe we know about the islands that are tourist destinations. We tend not to hear of destruction of the natural environments caused by tourism or the disappearance of islands as a result of rising sea levels.

The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean with an area greater than all of the world's dry land put together and it covers one third of the earth's surface. It contains an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 islands, many of which are uninhabited. Most of the larger islands have at one time been under colonial rule. Islands lying to the south of the Tropic of Cancer, but excluding Australia are traditionally grouped into three divisions: Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. This is illustrated in Figure 2⁷



Figure 2 – Oceania showing Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia

The islands of Micronesia include the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Saipan, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Kiribati. The Federated States of Micronesia consists of the States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae. It consists of a 607 islands with a land area of 701 km² extending across an ocean expanse five times the size of France. The total population is about 110,000. Satawal lies almost in the middle of the Federated States of Micronesia at the very edge of Yap State. It is a tiny solitary coral atoll, 2 km long and up to 800 m wide – it has a population of about 500 and the native language is Satawalese. It is shown in Figure 3.

⁷ Jane's Micronesia Home page – <http://www.janeresture.com/michome/index.htm>



Figure 3⁸ – Federated States of Micronesia

The central low lying Carolinian islands, which is a further subdivision of the islands of Micronesia, and which includes Satawal were among the most remote places on earth until relatively recent times. The people continued to live the way they had for centuries maintaining their canoe building, navigation and seafaring skills much longer than other Pacific Islanders. This was a result of several factors including, the islands:

- were not located on any of the major seafaring routes established by the early explorers, and consequently they were not used as ports of call for restocking of food or water,
- lacked good anchorages,
- lacked any natural resources to attract colonial powers,
- were so lacking in adequate food supplies that the inhabitants relied on trade with other islands for survival, and
- were not located in strategic enough positions for them to have been used as naval bases during the Second World War.

Many of the early European explorers and navigators marvelled at the superb design and speed of the ocean going canoes built by many Pacific Islanders. The Satawalese were amongst the last to retain the knowledge of how to construct and sail their outrigger canoes, which are acknowledged as being some of the best ever built. Many diagrams and plans are now available for the construction of such vessels but no such diagrams were used by the Satawalese – their designs had evolved over time to become perfectly suited to the local conditions. The knowledge of how to construct the various craft was passed down from father to son through stories, song and demonstration of the techniques. From an early age young boys played with toy canoes and watched their fathers make them. They also would have been onlookers as the real canoes were being constructed.

Perhaps with the detailed diagrams that are now available it would be possible to construct one of these canoes, but it would be impossible to sail it without using modern navigational

⁸ Lonely Planet – <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/federated-states-of-micronesia>

aids. These are the skills learnt over many years by the Carolinian navigators. They rely on several methods, all memorised, including detailed knowledge of the position of the stars, represented as a star compass. This would have been illustrated on the beach using shells or stones to represent the various stars. One such paafu or star compass is shown in Figure 4.

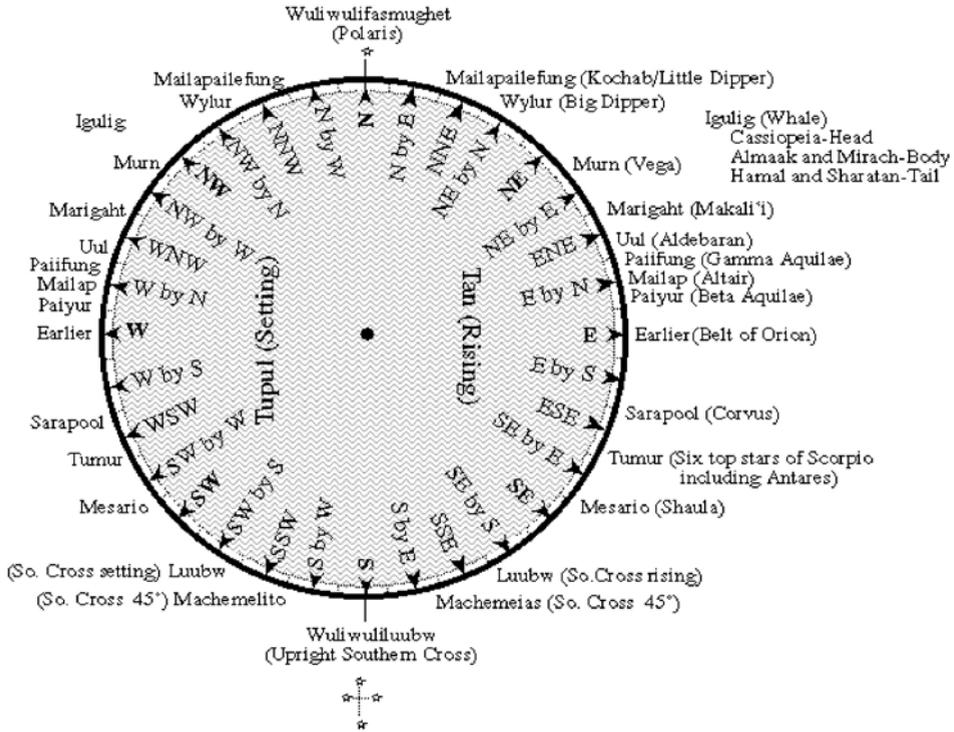


Figure 4– Paafu – Mau’s star compass⁹

The stars are only visible at night – during the day and on cloudy nights other systems had to be employed. It was necessary to identify cloud formations, to know the flight patterns of all birds, to understand the meaning of different types of waves, to recognise the movement of fish and to “read” the currents. There were songs to help the navigators remember everything. It is believed that originally the ability to navigate was knowledge passed down from legendary beings.

One interesting means of detecting a “land” wave was developed by the Gilbertese navigators who had discovered that the most sensitive organs of balance were the testicles. If the guiding swell was masked by other swells they would lie in the hollow of the hull and detect the imperceptible shiver of the canoe in their testicles¹⁰. This surely must be one technique that would be impossible to learn from a book!

It could be argued that these navigational and canoe building skills are of no real value in today’s technological age. I believe that it is important, if at all possible, to keep them alive. However, as a safeguard they should be well documented using a range of media – text, audio

⁹ Polynesian Voyaging Society - <http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/navigate/mauscompass.gif>

¹⁰ Kenneth Brower, *A Song for Satawal*, New York, Harper and Row, 1983, 86.

and audiovisual. This will never replace or replicate the original but sometimes it is all that we can hope for.

In addition it is essential that this documentation be made available to all – to the world at large and importantly to the people whose culture it is. This is the issue of ‘cultural feedback’ – i.e. returning or providing access to the information to the places, people and cultures from where it originated. This will be discussed this afternoon by Lyons and Sands in their presentation on collaboration between the Caribbean and the USA; and by Alan Marett talking about providing access to Australian Indigenous communities to the material captured in the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia. It is also a feature of OLCAP – the Online Language Community Access program in Northern Australia to be discussed by Jason Lee in a presentation on Friday.

In relation to the information that exists about Satawal two questions arise:

- how easy is it for the people of Satawal to access the documentary record of their heritage? and
- how easy is it for us to read and listen to it?

To answer these questions I will describe my efforts to locate that information and to speculate, for that is about all I can do, on how the people on Satawal would go about accessing documented information about their heritage.

I derived a lot of my information from the two books I purchased about Satawal – one written by an American Stephen Thomas and the other by Kenneth Brower whom I assume to be American. Both provide good descriptions of the island, its people, lifestyle, customs, and some beliefs. However, most information concerns navigation and navigators, and particularly the navigator, Mau Pailug, who is largely responsible for the revitalisation of traditional navigational methods. It is interesting to note that Mau is recognised as atypical in that he was prepared to share his knowledge outside his family circle. Micronesian custom dictates otherwise. In fact, in both books it is often apparent that there is reluctance on the part of many Satawalese to talk about certain topics, particularly their beliefs and legends. The title of Brower’s book is *A Song for Satawal* – this is a reference to the song a navigator sings to assist in his voyage to Satawal. Brower asked a navigator to sing the song for him but was told;

“I better not – I could but better not. Those informations are the last thing we have in the family. It’s the backbone of everything”.

This is one of the issues that has to be confronted when recording heritage that belongs to a culture different from ones own – do we have any rights in expecting to be told all? I do not have time to explore this question but I suspect that it will be addressed by Richard Moyle in his presentation this afternoon.

My other source of information was the Internet. After several hours of searching, which used up almost all of my data allowance, I did not find much. The best website I found with references to information about the Pacific was that of the Library of the University of Hawai’i¹¹ However there was not much about Satawal apart from the Steve Thomas collection which is housed

¹¹ Library of the University of Hawai’i <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/pacific/>.

there and which seems to be the most comprehensive body of information about Satawal that is easy to find.

I found many references to Pacific collections in a number of libraries and archives but in no case could I actually see or listen to material. I found no specific reference to Satawal or to the Satawalese language even though I know that it has been studied. The difficulty in finding information such as this will be discussed by Bird and Simons on Friday morning in a paper on Accessing the world's language resources.

The website of the College of Micronesia –FSM - Federated States of Micronesia, Yap State Campus Library¹² was quite good – its online library catalogue lists quite a lot of material dealing with Micronesian languages and culture, some of which is in CD, video or DVD formats. I emailed both its director and librarian seeking further information but received no reply.

My search was by no means comprehensive so I am not claiming that the information I found was the sum total of all that is available. However it does demonstrate the difficulties that have to be overcome and it points the way in which further research would have to be conducted. The heritage related information I found was related mainly to navigation with very little dealing with customs and beliefs. In addition there was quite a lot of factual data; the dates when significant (to white people) events occurred and a lot of statistics on subjects such as population, religions, roads, incomes etc. There was also a fair amount of chat concerning topics such as poor cell phone reception.

I did however come across a very interesting item on the very up to date Asian Development Bank Site¹³ that gives an insight into the barriers that would have to be overcome by a Satawalese person interested in discovering what had been written about their local heritage.

The following was said by a 40 year old mother of four.

I have lived with my family here in Madrich community on Yap proper for the last 4 years. I grew up on Satawal, the furthest outer island of Yap. My husband and I have four children; the eldest of which is 18 years old and is in Guam attending high school. We came to stay here on Yap proper for our children to attend school. Education is of a better quality here than on Satawal.

While my immediate family here is currently only four people, I have to provide for up to 20 additional family members at any given time. I have only a small house, barely enough space for the family, but we always have more people staying with us. Many of the men and boys stay in the men's house in the community but come here to eat every day. I have to cook for everyone, usually rice and local food, and no one helps me with this and other household chores, such as getting firewood. Many of these people have come here to get medical treatment at the capital, or to attend school, and they stay with relatives, without giving our family any financial support.

¹² College of Micronesia –FSM - Federated States of Micronesia, Yap State Campus Library
<http://www.womfsm.fm/yap/>

¹³ Asian Development Bank, Fighting poverty in Asia and the Pacific – Hardship in Micronesia.
http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Priorities_Poor/FSM/fsm0100.asp

Because we have to buy so much food on only my husband's salary of \$85 a month, we never seem to have enough to pay for taxis, power, water, and tuition. My eldest son works to pay for my daughter's tuition.

I wish I had enough money to support my family here in Madrich and have enough to send supplies back to Satawal. I like to go and visit the island occasionally and bring supplies such as rice and canned meat, but it costs \$36 round trip.

Another concern I have is for my community back in Satawal. The youth in the community have little respect for their chiefs, and thus the traditional culture is slowly deteriorating. This is also why I want my children to go to school here because they are now used to more freedom and don't have enough respect for our traditional culture. Living on the island would be very difficult for them.

It was also reported that alcohol consumption by young men was a big problem and that suicide rates, mostly among young males, was increasing.

This story demonstrates that dramatic social changes have taken place on Satawal and have altered everything. Traditional navigation may have taken on a new meaning and have spread to Hawai'i where it has become almost a new "extreme sport" but on Satawal it is no longer part of daily life. Changing values have resulted in a conflict between an adherence to certain traditional customs, such as sharing, and the need to earn money to pay for commodities and education.

A further insight into cultural sensitivities in Micronesia, that explains some of the matters highlighted in this story, is revealed in a recent publication¹⁴ concerning the implementation of the Strategy framework for promoting ICT literacy in the Asia Pacific region.

In talking about the Federated States of Micronesia it was said "Each of the country's four states has a different language and culture. Traditionally the state of Yap had a caste-like social system with high-status villages, each of which had an affiliated low-status village. In the past those who came from low-status villages worked without pay for those with higher status. In exchange those with higher status offered care and protection to those subservient to them. The traditional hierarchical social system has been gradually breaking down, and capable people from low-status villages could rise to senior positions in society. Nonetheless, the traditional system continued to affect contemporary life, with individuals from low-status villages still likely to defer to those with higher status. Persons from low-status backgrounds tended to be less assertive in advocating for their communities' needs with the government. As a result, low-status communities sometimes continued to be underserved"

When I was preparing this talk I did not know that Cheryl Stanborough from the National Archives of Yap would be attending this conference. She confirmed the continued operation of the caste system and was able to answer some of my unanswered questions, but my findings remain basically unaltered.

The answers to my two questions:

- how easy is it for the people of Satawal to access the documentary record of their heritage? and

¹⁴ Strategy framework for promoting ICT literacy in the Asia-Pacific region. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2008, 40pp. ISBN 978-92-9223-188-0 (e-publication) <http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/188/>

- how easy is it for us to read and listen to it?
are pretty straightforward.

For the Satawalese

- They face many challenges in acquiring information from the Internet due to several issues ranging from – financial constraints, cultural practices, educational barriers, lack of technological skills, poor Internet connections and lack of publicly available computers.
- It probably is not possible for them to purchase books on Satawal but they may be able to do so from Yap, assuming that they can afford to do so. They should however be able to source material from the Yap State Campus Library.

For us

- Information on the Internet is often difficult to locate, is limited and frequently is out of date.
- Extensive information is available, in a range of print and electronic publications, on navigation without charts or instruments.
- Other heritage related information, such as customs, beliefs and traditions is more limited but both the Brower and Thomas books provide good introductions.
- Additional material exists in many collections in various parts of the world and could be accessed by a serious researcher.

One way of looking at this situation is to say that – the surprising thing is not that we know so little but that we know so much. Satawal is a remote, tiny Pacific island atoll with a tiny population and yet we know quite a lot about it. I concluded that some information about Satawal had indeed moved into cyberspace but that it was most unlikely that people on Satawal could navigate a path to access it.

Many factors contributed to the current situation but the role played by modern media and the search for a good story cannot be overlooked. The publicity surrounding Mau's voyage from Satawal to Saipan in the early 1970s brought him to the attention of the organisers of the American Bicentennial celebrations who were planning a voyage in a traditional Polynesian canoe from Hawai'i to Tahiti, without using charts or instruments. They approached Mau who was prepared to break with tradition and use his skills outside his family circle to navigate that voyage which was documented in a film. That publicity was a catalyst for the creation of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and a renaissance in voyaging, canoe building and traditional navigation that continues to today. It also resulted in Kenneth Brower and Stephen Thomas becoming aware of Satawal and other central Carolinian islands and their subsequent travels and books. Although all of this has resulted in an increased awareness of traditional navigational techniques there is not necessarily an increase in the preservation of other aspects of the cultural heritage of Satawal. There is an urgent need to develop reliable strategies to ensure the survival and preservation of all such significant cultural heritage.

An excellent analysis of the challenges faced by Pacific island nations in preserving their cultural heritage was presented by Setareki Tale¹⁵ at a recent meeting of the UNESCO

¹⁵ Setareki Tale, "Memory of the World – The Pacific Perspective" paper presented at The 3rd International Conference of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia, 19 – 22 February, 2008 <http://www.amw.org.au/mow2008/mow/speakerPapers/TalePaper.pdf>

Memory of the World Programme in Canberra. He summarised the situation as:

- the culture and history is contained in oral histories and legends, many of which are disappearing as the younger generations adopt a more modern lifestyle,
- cultural matters arising from having most of their culture in intangible forms – such as song, dance and stories; and having much of their culture recorded by "outsiders". This may involve interpretation that is inaccurate,
- technological matters – poor electricity supplies, low take up rate of Internet access (using CIA figures about 15% of the population),
- poor communication between islands,
- environmental matters – heritage at risk due to poor weather, cyclones, high humidity, and rising sea levels (parts of Tuvalu have already disappeared beneath the ocean),
- lack of skills – staff in archives, libraries and museums (often the same institution) having a lower level of training than similar workers elsewhere,
- lack of funds – inadequate funds to
 - organise and manage archives
 - pay staff
 - train staff
 - create collections (by recording etc)
- build appropriate buildings with suitable environmental control
- house collections,
- low populations dispersed over many islands,
- vast distances between the islands,
- difficulty and high cost associated with travel between islands.

This is a daunting list of challenges and it is difficult to identify potential solutions. A closer examination of activities that have already been conducted demonstrates an abundance of surveys, usually conducted by outside “experts” who tend to earn as much for one week’s work as an indigenous person would earn in a year. Most of these surveys produce reports emphasising the seriousness of the situation but rarely is there any follow up on any of their recommendations. Several UNESCO activities and programs aim to provide guidance and assistance but in reality few, if any, are of real benefit.

There is the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)¹⁶. In January 2005, a high-level United Nations (UN) meeting was convened in Mauritius to review the implementation of and refine the 1994 Barbados Programme. The principal negotiated outputs of the meeting were a strategy document and a political declaration. It was claimed that particular attention was being given to often marginalised dimensions such as culture, youth and outer islands. I was unable to find any activity in the Pacific resulting from this program.

2008 is the United Nations International Year of Languages – again no benefit appears to have flowed into the Pacific from this initiative.

¹⁶ UNESCO Mauritius Strategy - http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12115&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

I can do no more than to briefly mention a few suggestions that could help in raising awareness to the importance of fragile cultural heritage in the Pacific and elsewhere.

The first is the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage¹⁷ which was adopted in 2003. In its preamble it refers to all of the existing UN and UNESCO instruments relating to human rights, traditional culture and cultural diversity. The purposes of the Convention are to:

- safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- raise awareness of the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- provide for international cooperation and assistance.

To date from the Pacific only Vanuatu and Tonga have become signatories to this convention and Australia is reconsidering its former decision not to sign. It is interesting to note that in addition to Australia, other countries that have not signed include Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. Concern has been expressed by these countries in relation to their obligations to their indigenous communities.

Time prevents me from talking in depth about the benefits of being a signatory to this convention but it certainly places commitments on governments to preserve their intangible cultural heritage.

Another UNESCO activity that has potential to raise awareness to the significance of cultural heritage is its Memory of the World (MoW) Programme¹⁸ that has its origins in 1992 when Federico Mayor, the then Director General, was so appalled by the destruction of the documentary heritage of the former Yugoslavia, caused by civil unrest, that he introduced the MoW Programme to safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity.

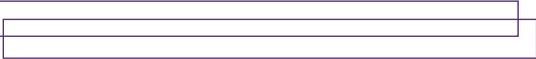
A major component of this program is the creation of Memory of the World Registers at national, regional and international levels. These registers recognise documents of significance that exist at the three levels – international, regional and national. The international register is comparable to the World Heritage List.

The objectives of the MoW program are to identify, to raise awareness of, to preserve and to provide access to documentary heritage material of world significance. The definition of documentary heritage is very broad and includes: print materials – books, newspapers, journals etc; manuscript materials on all media; photographs; film; video; sound recordings; digital media; music scores etc.

Strict application of criteria is employed before any material is listed on any register. The primary criterion is significance and since the implementation of the Programme all criteria have been refined to become as objective as possible. Benefits of listing on a register relate

¹⁷ UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage - <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00006>

¹⁸ UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html



primarily to raising awareness – it demonstrates that the listed material has been assessed by UNESCO to be of great significance. This has been successfully used as a very powerful argument to preserve such material if it is threatened with destruction or disposal.

In closing I could not possibly use any better words than those used in the promotion of this conference.

“The survival of sound and audiovisual archives is dependent on the exchange of ideas, shared standards, similar technological approaches and mutual support. The conference will explore the activities, achievements, interconnections and relationships between individuals and institutions active in the field of sound and audiovisual collections”.

I have no magic words to assist you in this task and I apologise for concentrating on only this part of the world but it provides an extreme example of the problems and challenges that exist elsewhere. I wish you successful navigation between the various conference topics, enabling you to develop viable channels between your varied professional specialisations.

The Mexican Soundscape Project

Lidia Camacho, Fonoteca Nacional, Mexico

Paper presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia

Introduction: Soundscapes, Cultural Landscapes

In 1992, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee adopted the concept of “cultural landscapes” to give special recognition to particular places “created, formed and preserved by the ties and interactions between man and his environment.”

If we borrow this concept to reflect on the world of sound, it is clear that the contemporary soundscape is a product of the interaction between the sounds of nature and the sounds produced by humankind, leading to the conclusion that soundscapes can merit cultural heritage status.

The interaction between the sounds of a specific environment and the people who carry out activities there may be singular enough to hold forms of cultural identity and differentiate between cultures in the acoustic dimension.

We tend to characterize a place by the architecture of its buildings, by its customs, by the flavors of its foods; but at the same time we pay little attention to the unconscious impressions made on us by the sounds heard there.

The peal of bells that wakes up the inhabitants, the cries of vendors as they hawk their products, the muted thundering of nearby waterfalls, the noise and bustle of the market; all these may be parts of the distinctive soundscape that make up the acoustic identity of a place and characterize it to locals and visitors alike.¹⁹

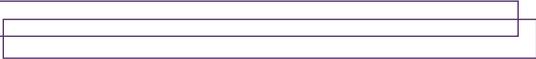
From this perspective, the sounds of a region have heritage value thanks to their ability to invoke a function of specific social identity. A people recognizes and distinguishes itself by the cultural expressions by which it lives and which set it apart; whether these are a traditional food, a village square, or a regional dance. Each of these elements contributes a small part to the sum of the cultural and social identity of a people.

In the same way, society and the natural world surrounding it (that is, the ecosystem as a whole) are expressed through sounds and the way they are produced; by the particular rhythms and cadences that paint acoustic tapestries in the peculiar landscapes of every particular sociocultural system.

It is vital, then, that we become truly aware of the existence of these sounds and, to the extent possible, take action to care for, value and preserve them.

I would now like to share something of our experience at the Fonoteca, the National Sound Archive of Mexico with a project we have undertaken which is related to two particular objectives;

¹⁹ Some of the elements of a soundscape can be emblems of recognition for a place. Murray Schafer termed these “soundmarks”; see Schafer, R. Murray, *The Tuning of the World*.



1) to increase appreciation of our heritage acoustic environment, this being understood as “cultural landscapes,” and 2) give priority to an auditory analysis that will raise our awareness of the changes taking place in our environment by encouraging us to truly listen to the sounds around us.

The Soundscape of Mexico project

We have developed a project called the Soundscape of Mexico.

A direct forerunner of this undertaking can be identified in the work begun in the 1970s at Simon Fraser University in Canada by Murray Schafer, Hildegard Westerkamp and Barry Truax. Their innovative studies examined soundscapes in different places using field recordings which were then analyzed in great detail. Their projects also gave rise to Schafer’s World Soundscape Project (WSP) which set the standard for soundscape research and artistic creation.²⁰

Here we should perhaps take a moment to make it clear that from the first moment of the emergence of the soundscape concept, work designated by this term has developed in two parallel, sometimes simultaneous ways; namely research and composition.

Field recordings have enabled the acoustic characteristics of an environment to be studied, but at the same time these recordings have also served as raw material for experiment and composition, yielding acoustic works composed by artists, musicians and audio designers. This has often given rise to a certain confusion, as the term Soundscape is applied to two different entities. Perhaps the distinction proposed by Barry Truax himself should be restored. He differentiated between Soundscape Ecology, the relationships between humans and their acoustic environments; and Soundscape Design, the name he gave to the creation or reproduction and the modeling of acoustic environments through the process of sound composition.

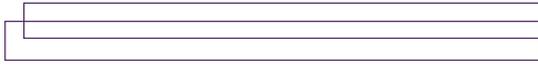
In Mexico, we began to promote the creation of soundscapes in 2004, when I was the head Radio Educación. With support from the German broadcasters Radio Berlin Brandenburg and Deutschland Radio, we inaugurated the project “Soundscapes of Mexico.” Our aim was to create sound compositions by recording the most characteristic sounds of different regions of Mexico using modern audio techniques and technology.

We have been able to continue the project at the National Sound Archives, incorporating the goals of preserving and organizing Mexico’s sound heritage.

The purpose of the Soundscape of Mexico project is to preserve, document and maintain the vast wealth and diversity of the acoustic expressions of our country for present and future generations. In concrete terms, the project involves exploring each of Mexico’s 31 states to collect and capture, using professional recording technology, the most significant acoustic expressions making up the characteristic soundscape of each state.

A group of artists, sound engineers and sound designers are making the recordings and using them to create compositions that reflect the soundscapes of each respective Mexican state.

²⁰ For more information about the origins of the Soundscape concept, see Barry Truax, *Soundscape, Acoustic Communication and Environmental Sound Composition*. Contemporary Music Review Vol. 15, Part. 1. London: Hardwood.



But Soundscapes of Mexico is more than just a springboard for a dedicated effort to collect sounds and order them by an esthetic logic. It is also an opportunity to form a significant collection of sound documents that will be catalogued and classified, and entered into the National Sound Archives collection, thereby enriching and extending the Acoustic Heritage of Mexico and the opportunity to let its sounds be heard.

“Soundscape” is, in fact, one of the classifications within our archive, alongside “voice,” “music” and “radio.” These field recordings of the Mexican soundscape are unique, one-off documents which are deposited in the sound archives after going through the cataloguing process.

CATALOGUE RECORD

The motivation behind the creation of a Soundscape is to enable the most significant sounds of each state to be identified. To do so, we must learn about the traditional music of a place, its community celebrations and festivals, its indigenous languages, the expressions and idioms used by its people, and the trades they exercise, its natural environments; in short all the acoustic elements that will help us to discover what sounds represent its identity.

To date, after rigorous research, field recording and post-production work, the soundscapes of five Mexican states have been rendered; Chiapas, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, the Federal District and Veracruz.

Recording, documenting and preserving the Soundscape of Mexico is an important challenge, but at the same time a splendid opportunity to conserve an invaluable part of our acoustic identity.

A Working Model for Developing and Sustaining Collaborative Relationships Between Archival Repositories in the Caribbean and the United States

*Bertram Lyons and Rosita M. Sands, Association for Cultural Equity / Alan Lomax Archive, USA
Paper presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia*

Forty-seven years ago, noted folklorist and musicologist, Alan Lomax, conducted a sweeping survey of the musical traditions of the Eastern Caribbean and Lesser Antilles islands. This survey, funded in part by support from the John D. Rockefeller Foundation, and sponsored by the University of the West Indies, consisted of 180 days of fieldwork on twelve different islands, including Grenada, Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Carriacou, Dominica, Martinique, St. Barthelemey, and Guadeloupe. The remarkable body of materials documented during the summer of 1962 captured a brilliant array of musical styles, genres, customs, and traditions emanating from the diversity of cultures represented on these islands. While the focus of the fieldwork was on music and dance, Lomax's work documented a remarkable panorama of cultural activity that was rooted in the everyday life activities of the people, such as work songs, children's game songs, and lullabies, as well as a collection of cultural traditions that were more formally-organized and appropriately categorized as ceremonial and/or ritualistic. This 1962 Caribbean music fieldwork, which consists of almost 2,000 field recordings and over 1,000 documentary photographs, provides a glimpse into cultural life as it existed on these islands over four decades ago and presents a revealing vista into the ways that people incorporated music and dance into their lives and commemorated their most significant events.

This article reports on the digital repatriation of the 1962 Caribbean materials, a project that is part of a global and more ambitious dissemination mission of the Association for Cultural Equity/Alan Lomax Archive. Presented at the 2008 IASA conference as an example of a working, collaborative model involving several archives and repositories on an international scale, this project has three salient themes: 1) it focuses on a lesser known yet significant aspect of Alan Lomax's work—his recordings in the Caribbean; 2) it speaks to the potential for archives to design and implement collaborative projects; and 3) it explores the benefits of a strategic approach to providing access to collections, with a specific focus on thinking beyond the Internet as an access provider. A collaborative effort between the Association for Cultural Equity (ACE, also known as the Alan Lomax Archive) and the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) of Columbia College Chicago, the specific project goals of this repatriation project are:

- to identify repositories located in the areas of the Caribbean where the 1962 materials were originally recorded and to assess the ability of the repositories to hold, preserve, manage, and provide access to the materials;
- to repatriate digital copies of Alan Lomax's Caribbean field recordings, photographs, and notes (now physically located in New York, NY and Washington, DC) to those locations that meet the assessment criteria; and
- to lay the groundwork for the establishment of ongoing relationships by partnering with these cultural repositories in the delivery of these materials and in the promotion of the materials to the local communities.

The primary objective of the project relates to the concept of persistence—the aim to make these sources of intangible cultural heritage accessible to present and future generations in

the places and among the people that created them. The broader goals are to provide wide accessibility and to promote circulation of cultural heritage collections, as well as to foster preservation of these same collections and to cultivate resource sharing between nations, institutions, and individuals. This presentation was included as part of a session themed, “interconnection and cooperation,” at the 2008 IASA Annual Conference.

The Association for Cultural Equity

The Association for Cultural Equity oversees the intellectual legacy of Alan Lomax, whose long and productive career as a folklorist, anthropologist, author, radio broadcaster, filmmaker, concert and record producer, and television host left a legacy of field recordings, writing, and research that the Library of Congress on its website refers to as “one of the most important collections of ethnographic material in the world (<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/>, accessed on November 25, 2008).”



Photo 1: Alan Lomax at the Association for Cultural Equity, New York, 1986. Photo by Peter Figlestahler.

The American Folklife Center, which is a branch of the Library of Congress, the official Federal-level cultural institution of the United States, now holds the original copies of Lomax’s collected works. However, the Association for Cultural Equity (ACE) maintains the digital preservation and reference copies of these materials and holds authority to publish and distribute them in creative ways. In this sense, ACE now exists as a transitional archive, in the process of assuming a new role as steward of a digital-only collection, a role that straddles the philosophical fence that exists between preservation and access, and between being sedentary and being mobile. This is a move towards a state of hybridity and a new level of functionality in the interstices of cultural heritage and cultural collaboration.

History of the ACE Repatriation Project

In 1998, ACE began efforts to organize and preserve Alan Lomax's accumulated work, which includes over 5,000 hours of sound recordings, 400,000 feet of motion picture film, and thousands of videotapes, scholarly books and journals, photographic prints and negatives, databases, and unpublished manuscripts. The Caribbean materials that ground the Caribbean Dissemination project represent about 300 hours of recordings and just over 1,000 photographs.

Through comprehensive and meticulous preservation efforts, digital masters of each audio and visual item in the collection were captured and created, and sub-masters and reference copies were made for each. Databases were developed to hold descriptive, technical, and administrative metadata about each digital file created in the process. This process revealed that from these basic elements—the raw materials—any number of interfaces could be created to accommodate the needs and profiles of different audiences and it also highlighted the value of creating an online catalog, which is now available on ACE's website, located at <http://www.culturalequity.org/rc/index.html>.

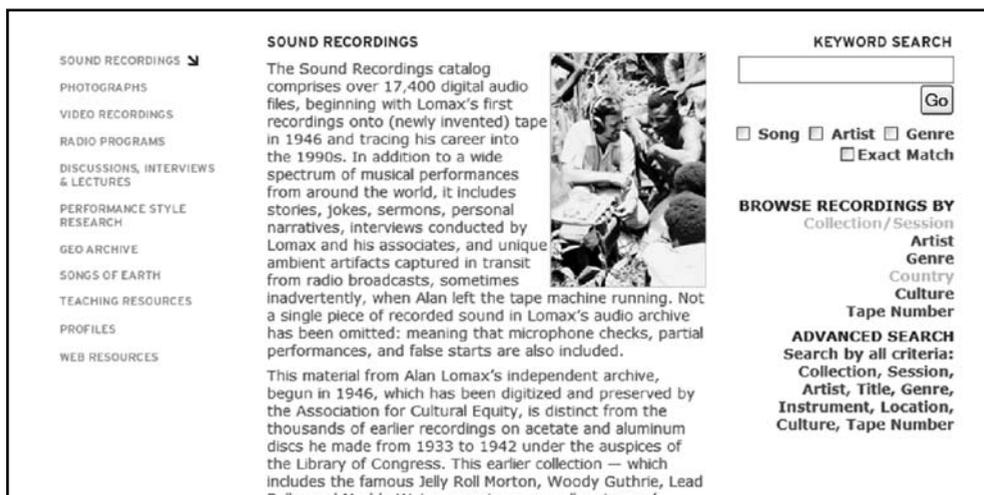


Photo 2: Screenshot from the Research Center on ACE's website where the Alan Lomax sound recording catalog resides.

The catalog provides 45-second access to all of the digitized sound recordings in the collection, as well as access to Lomax's collection of over 5,000 photographs. It is openly accessible online and makes these materials available in a passive manner to anyone with Internet access. We are, however, also in the fortunate position to be able to share these resources in an active manner with other archives, which is the purpose served by the dissemination project.

Underlying Philosophy

Cultural equity and cultural feedback are two of the fundamental ideas grounding this work. The Association for Cultural Equity—as its name suggests—was created by Alan Lomax through his belief in “cultural equity,” which is the idea that the expressive traditions of all

local and ethnic cultures should be equally valued as representative of the multiple forms of human adaptation on the Earth. It is a belief that all cultures should have equal time in educational settings and in mass communication systems. This concept of cultural equity serves as one of the underlying philosophies of the project's goals in sharing the diverse cultural resources held at ACE.

Another important thread is Lomax's concept of "cultural feedback," which embodies the idea, championed early by a number of folklorists including Alan Lomax, that folklore and primary documentation of culture should be put into the hands of the original cultural creators, rather than remain the sole province of scholars, archivists, and entertainment giants. As a practical application of this concept, Lomax, on his trips to the Caribbean in the 1960s, brought with him the largest stereo speakers he could fit on the plane, hauled them to every recording locale, no matter how remote, and made it a practice to play back recording sessions to the musicians and the entire community each time he recorded them.



**Photo 3: Alan Lomax recording in Dominica, 1962.
Photo by Antoinette Marchand.**

The commercial mass communication system was always loud, overshadowing the un-amplified voice of cultural expression. Lomax sought to even the playing field. At the end of his 1962 Caribbean recording trip, Lomax deposited analog tape copies of his recordings at the University College of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, with the hope of beginning a pan-Caribbean cultural archive.

Today we take up this same thread of cultural feedback by saying, "let's deposit/return copies of intangible cultural heritage and primary documentation in our collections to the places and people nearest their original creation, where these testimonials of cultural history and

continuity will be accessible to local communities and can be brought into school curricula, music education programs, and can be used creatively through other public programming.” To do this, we invite collaborations with repositories, prepare formal Acts of Donation, coordinate deliveries of data, and work with repositories to deliver the materials in the form that will be most useful to them.

From an archivist’s perspective, it seems important to note that not only is the goal of providing meaningful access to these collections being attained, the materials are also being safeguarded through the deposit of multiple copies in multiple places. We are, in fact, proliferating the digital existence of these collections by creating sub-master preservation backup copies in every participating repository. Thus, it is important to note that this method of resource sharing is useful for both access as well as preservation.

The Process

Originally, the project was designed on a theoretical model that consisted of three basic steps:

- 1) Capture digital source materials to preservation standards
- 2) Create partnerships with interested repositories
- 3) Deliver standard digital packages to each repository

In practice, however, it became necessary to modify this model in the following manner:

- 1) Capture digital source materials to preservation standards
- 2) Create partnerships with interested repositories
- 3) Assess the technological compatibility level of each repository
 - a. Are computers available? Is the Internet readily accessible?
 - b. What level of database knowledge and operability is held by individuals responsible for maintaining the materials?
 - c. How will their users access the material locally?
 - d. What will work most effectively and efficiently for the repository over the long-term?
- 4) Develop digital delivery to suit practical needs, capabilities, and uses of each repository
- 5) Maintain collaborative relationships with repositories to handle changing technical needs (as repositories develop new technological capabilities, ACE can re-deliver content in different formats).

While the modified process has proven to be flexible and effective, there are some important lessons that have been learned along the way. Throughout our work, the aim has been to

adhere to international preservation standards, metadata standards, open-source formats, and other digital best-practices. We recognize the value in standardization, interoperability, and trusted-digital-repositories; we also strive to stay abreast of current technological advancements and research. In the process of implementation, it has become apparent that open-source formats and widespread online availability do not always translate into universal accessibility. In reality, these criteria result in accessibility only for those who have the necessary technological resources in place and the requisite technological knowledge and assistance available. We have come to understand that our efforts, in fulfillment of the dissemination project, must recognize and be sensitive to the inequities that exist in the world, particularly as they relate to technological capabilities of worldwide archival and cultural institutions. It is also evident that flexibility and creativity are necessary in the short term to overcome small inequities in order to foster and facilitate the long-term goal of engendering greater equality.

The question may well be asked: why disseminate at all? Why not put the materials online for everyone to access? Our response to those questions is that while the materials are made available online, our dissemination strategy rests solidly on the conviction that online accessibility alone is not enough to achieve our goals. Often, the communities where we plan to deposit this material do not have consistent or widespread internet access or are not comfortable with the Internet as a sole access point. Depositing the materials in local repositories in the most flexible manner makes it possible for each repository to share these resources with their constituents, with their communities, in the most useful and appropriate fashion.

History of the Caribbean Collection

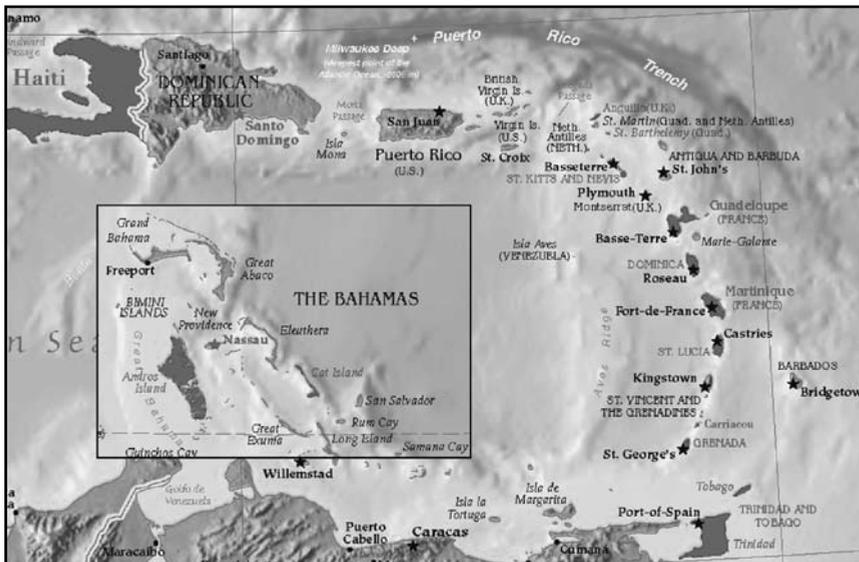


Photo 4: Caribbean recording locations, 1935–1967.

In 1935, Alan Lomax completed his first recordings in the Bahamas for the Library of Congress. There he documented anthems, chanteys, and old story-songs from sponge industry

workers and fishermen on Andros, Cat Island, and Nassau. In 1937, still with the Library of Congress, Lomax recorded in Haiti where he encountered a great panoply of music — ritual traditions and work songs from the countryside, rare 16th century French ballads, and a variety of emerging urban forms. In 1962, no longer with the Library of Congress, Lomax worked in the Eastern Caribbean, making almost 2,000 field recordings and a little over 1,000 documentary photographs in twelve Caribbean islands, including Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Carriacou, St. Lucia, St. Bart's, Anguilla, Nevis, and St. Kitts. Principal collaborators and advisors to the project were Jacob D. Elder, Dan Crowley, Roger Abrahams, Philip Sherlock (University College of the West Indies, Jamaica), and Andrew C. Pearse (St. Lucia). A complete copy on open-reel tape was deposited at the University College of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica. Later in the 1960s Lomax made recordings in St. Eustatius and the Dominican Republic.

From 2003–2005, ACE processed and made digital transfers of the 1962 Caribbean sound recordings. This process required scanning each of the photographic negatives and populating databases with technical, administrative, and descriptive metadata about each file.

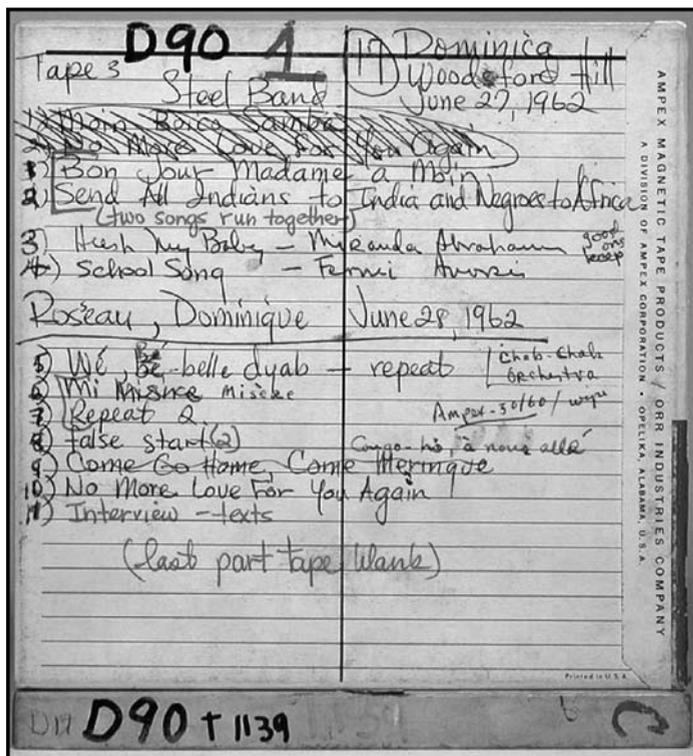
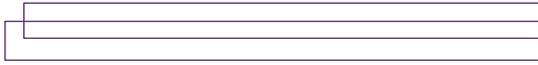


Photo 5: Tape box from tapes recorded in Rampanalgas, Trinidad; Roseau, Dominica; and Le Pérou, Martinique.

After the completion of this work, we also deposited the original materials for safekeeping with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. This left us ready to begin the process of dissemination and to embark on the design of a project that was based on fundamental, shared beliefs about the value of documenting and preserving intangible cultural heritage.



The Collaboration

In 2005, ACE entered into a partnership with the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) of Columbia College Chicago for the repatriation of the 1962 Caribbean music materials. The CBMR, at the time, maintained a remote branch, the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute, which was located on the island of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The Center for Black Music Research was founded in 1983 by Dr. Samuel A. Floyd Jr. as a research unit of Columbia College, an arts, media, and communications institution located in Chicago, Illinois. The Center's mission is to document, preserve, and disseminate information on the worldwide scope of black music, i.e., the various styles, forms, and genres of music of the African Diaspora. It is the only organization of its kind that promotes and produces research on the full spectrum of music produced by peoples of African descent, across cultures, historical time periods, and regions of the world.

The extraordinary body of research completed by Alan Lomax, particularly his documentation of black cultural traditions, presented a natural and profound synergy with the Center's goals. Because of this and the Center's interest in extending its research agenda throughout the Caribbean region, serving as a partner and collaborator in the "repatriation" of the Caribbean music materials was recognized and valued for its reciprocal benefits for each of the partnering entities.

In 2005, the Center was designated as the repository for the entire Caribbean music materials and as a partner in the distribution of copies of the materials to the respective islands from whence they were collected. Because the bulk of this collection had not been previously-published nor had been widely-available for use by scholars or researchers, it represented a significant contribution to the body of research on Caribbean music-cultures and to the field of black music research, in general. In essence, these materials represent aural and visual snapshots of music and dance activities as they were practiced over 45 years ago in twelve distinct, yet fundamentally-connected island communities.

Alan Lomax's fieldwork from 1962 is remarkable for both its breadth and scope, as it provides an expansive representation of the functions, customs, traditions, and everyday life-cycle events of the music-cultures examined. The musical-genres collected range from "baby minding tunes," lullabies, clapping games, and jump rope tunes to songs for funeral rituals and wakes. Other materials collected include hymns, wedding songs, story-songs, political and social satires, chanties, work songs, and folk dance genres present on the various islands at that time.

The dissemination process involves the identification of established, operational archives on the recipient islands. In exchange for receiving copies of the entire set of materials collected on their respective islands—photographs, recordings, and field notes—archives agree to preserve them, to make them accessible to the general public, and to make their best efforts to facilitate use of the materials by researchers, scholars, educators, and students. The dissemination to the respective islands is also viewed as the preliminary step to what we hope will materialize—ongoing collaboration amongst the various entities towards the shared goals of cultural equity and continued documentation efforts.

Three dissemination projects have taken place to date. The first, in 2005, was the dissemination of the materials collected on the sister islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, which are located in the northern part of the Leeward Islands.



Photo 6: Fife and drum band, Brick Kiln, Nevis, 1962. Photo by Alan Lomax.

These materials were deposited in a public archives managed by the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, an organization whose stated mission is “to promote effective management of the historical, cultural and natural resources of the island of Nevis for the benefit of all of its people (<http://www.nevis-nhcs.org/>).” A public ceremony for the deposit and “official reception” of the Lomax materials was held at the Museum of Nevis History. The program was attended by local government officials from the Nevis Department of Culture, including the Ministers of Youth and Sport from Nevis and St. Kitts, with a keynote address given by the Premier of Nevis and presentations by representatives of ACE and the CBMR. Over twenty individuals who had been recorded in 1962 were also in attendance at this event, in addition to the local resident who accompanied Alan Lomax to all the locations on Nevis and St. Kitts where the recordings were made.

The second dissemination took place in 2006, with the deposit of the materials collected on the island of St. Lucia, which is part of the island group in the Lesser Antilles and one of the Windward Islands.



**Photo 7: Woman performing in Au Leon, St. Lucia, July, 1962.
Photo by Alan Lomax.**

These materials were deposited at the Folk Research Centre (FRC), a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1973 to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of St. Lucia. According to its Web site, the FRC has a broad mandate that focuses on culture

and folk arts as “. . . a vehicle for change and to illustrate the development potential of cultural heritage particularly in the field of education and in economic development (<http://www.stluciafolk.org/about-us.html>, accessed on November 26, 2008).” A public ceremony for the formal deposit of the materials included performances by local musicians and dancers that featured examples of traditions documented by Lomax in 1962 and a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Lomax’s work in the Caribbean and in St. Lucia.

Finally, the third dissemination was made to the Médiathèque Caraïbe Bettino Lara in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, French West Indies.



Photo 8: Bertolie Laussane with drums, Lasserre, Morne-à-l’Eau, Guadeloupe, July 1962. Photo by Alan Lomax.



Because Médiathèque Caraïbe is a library whose mission is to serve the entire Caribbean region, collected materials from neighboring countries, including Martinique, Dominica, St. Barthelemy, and St. Lucia, were also deposited there.

The response to the return of these materials to the respective islands has been appreciative and overwhelmingly enthusiastic. On the island of Nevis, where a published version of some of the materials is available, it is reported that not a day goes by without hearing somewhere on the island a recording of a song collected by Alan Lomax. On St. Lucia, where cultural work is valued on a number of levels, the return of the materials is viewed as critical not only to the “national development process [of the island],” but as well to the “understanding of local cultural heritage, identity, and the processes of local creative expression (Kennedy Samuel).”

For the Association for Cultural Equity (ACE) and the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR), this repatriation project is not solely for the benefit of the individual island repositories and their local communities. Rather, it allows a rich and fulfilling opportunity, in the words of Anna Lomax Wood, Alan Lomax’s daughter, “to interact with the people of the region whose heritage it represents.” These materials represent a cultural legacy the historical value of which can not be truly calculated, and the potential worth of which is only now beginning to be fully realized. We believe that the realization of this potential is now made possible through a strategically-designed dissemination and repatriation process that rests solidly on the spirit of interconnection and cooperation.

Archiving Challenges in Africa: The Case of Post-Conflict Liberia²¹

Proscovia Svård, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden

Presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia

This paper explores the challenges of archiving in Africa, drawing on a case study of Liberia, a country that has just emerged from a decade-long civil war. It examines the challenges of archiving/documenting of human rights abuses during the Liberian civil war by the recently established Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) but will also draw on experiences from the Sierra Leonean TRC. Archiving in Africa is beset with numerous problems and they include the lack of functioning national archives, adequate personnel, financial resources, lack of Internet diffusion, low literacy levels and capacities and the political will to make information available to the public. Yet, archiving is key to the promotion of transparency, accountability and democratic development and therefore of importance in societies where people have been repressed and where endemic corruption and resource distribution have led to civil wars. The Liberian TRC is likely to generate compound documents, which will include audiovisual files. While the developed world is grappling with the electronic preservation of information, the developing countries in Africa and elsewhere need to address the challenge of the management and establishment of information systems that will promote the freedom of information. This paper intends to come up with recommendations that will be useful for the planning of proper information systems for future TRC missions on the continent.

Introduction

Documentation of war atrocities is crucial in addressing impunity and should be utilised to promote an understanding of the causes of conflict. This is done by post-war governments and supported by the international community, to enhance reconciliation, peace building and reconstruction processes. Since the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is expected to usher in a new beginning and a breakaway from the traumatic past, it is the proper platform on which the freedom of information and a meaningful public sphere should be built. The records generated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) should be taken care of in a manner that will enhance their dissemination to the citizens. The way post-conflict governments handle public records is key to the promotion of transparency and accountability, concepts that symbolize the goodwill of governments to run the affairs of a state in a democratic manner. Liberia in West Africa is transiting from a brutal civil war that lasted well over a decade and was characterised by massive killings, use of child soldiers, internal displacement, sexual violence and plunder (Jalloh and Marong, 2005:193-195). Against that background, the Liberian TRC was established in fulfilment of the Agreement reached during the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana on the 18th of August, 2003. The mandate of the TRC is to document crimes committed against humanity from 1979 - 2003. The CPA was brokered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and signed by all parties to the conflict and that included the political parties, the rebels and the civil society actors. The CPA embodies

²¹ The author works as a Project Co-ordinator for the Documentation Project on the Nordic Liberation Movement in Southern Africa and as a Research Administrator on the Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa Program being run at the Nordic Africa Institute. She has a BA and an MA in Archives and Information Science and B Sc in Media and Information Science.



commitments that were made by the parties and these included in particular the protection of civilians and the upholding of the rule of law during the transitional period. Under the agreement, a two-year National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was established. Its mandate was to oversee the peace process until the next presidential elections that took place in October 2005, (Lamin, 2005:229). Lamin argues that the CPA was a political settlement that was struck to avoid a slide back to conflict by the different warring factions, (Lamin, 2005:230).

Article 26 of the African Charter also encourages African governments to carry out an official inquiry into human rights abuses and to establish national institutions to protect human rights, (African Watch, 1991:3 - 4). The findings of the inquiry should be made public to expose the wrongdoings of those involved in the atrocities. This promotes the independence and impartiality of the process. The call for official inquiry is to establish that governments should be held responsible for their actions (African Watch, 1991:6).

The on-going Liberian TRC was from the beginning granted a two-year lifespan to finish its work. It was scheduled to finish its work by the 22 of June 2008 with an addition of three months. It has now requested the House of Representatives to extend its tenure with an additional nine months (Sworh, 2008:1). The TRC will leave behind archives with compound documents that will include paper documents and digital records. This rich documentation includes ten thousand photos from all the TRC activities, meetings with donors and partners, workshops, program activities statements, hearings in 15 counties and the Diaspora, thematic and institutions hearings and hundreds of tapes, video footages, CDs and DVDs (Email communication with TRC staff-member). This documentation will require an information management infrastructure. The archives will logically need to be arranged to separate classified information from that which should be made available to the Liberian society. The proper preservation of the TRC documents would also prevent the misuse of records that could cause political unrest. The enlightenment of a society through access to information is vital to the country's development and human rights. For reconciliation and democratization to take place, the records that are being generated by the TRC will need a proper strategy for preservation and dissemination in order to effectively be used to educate the public about the causes of conflict and to avoid a recurrence.

This paper examines the challenges of archiving/documenting of human rights abuses by the recently established Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) but will also draw on experiences from the Sierra Leonean TRC. Lack of functioning national information institutions, adequate personnel, information management skills, financial resources, internet diffusion and low levels of education, are likely to prevent the proper diffusion of the information that is being generated by the TRC. The paper is divided into the introduction, historical background of the Liberian war and an analysis of the documentation process of the Liberian TRC. This is followed by the conclusion and some recommendations.

The study relies on a combination of primary and secondary data as well as the author's fieldwork. It is based on visits and interviews carried out in both Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2006 and 2007. Unstructured interviews were carried out with students, researchers, activists and ordinary people on the TRC process and post-conflict developments.

The Liberian Civil War: A Historical Background

In 1816, a group of distinguished Americans formed an organization called the American Colonization Society (ACS) under the leadership of Rev. Robert Finley, who was a Presbyterian Clergyman from New Jersey (Hyman, 2003:2). The organisation had the intent of founding a colony in West Africa for the freed slaves. The colony was later called Liberia adapted from liberty. The US gave US \$100,000 to the ACS to enable the organisation to acquire land, build infrastructure, and to enable the freed slave settlers to defend themselves against the indigenous people. This clarifies the historical linkage between Liberia and the USA. In 1821 - 1843 the organization resettled 4000 African Americans and in 1822 - 1867, it resettled 23,000. The arrival of Americo-Liberians created tension between them and the indigenous people, (Hyman, 2003:3). The conflict in Liberia was not only a result of tyrants wanting to hold on to power but also had its roots in the century and a half domination of the Americo-Liberians who were descendants of the freed slaves from America. They dominated the majority of the indigenous people and ruled through coercion (Ethnic Violence and Justice, 2003:80). The ACS agents governed Liberia for 25 years and in July 26 1847 Liberia became the first independent black republic (Hyman, 2003: 5 - 6). Under the leadership of President William V. S. Tubman (1944 - 1971) the tension between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous people worsened (Hyman, 2003:9) and led to the coup that over threw the Americo-Liberian President William R. Tolbert Jr by Samuel K. Doe in 1980. Although the Americo-Liberians only made up 2.5% of the population, they ruled and marginalised the rest of the population made of 15 ethnic groups (Akopari et al, 2007:77). Samuel Doe's coup d'état brought the rule of the True Whig Party (TWP) to an end. The Americo - Liberians ruled Liberia from 1847 until 1980 (Hyman, 2003) and Gberie further contends that Samuel Doe's coup ended the misrule of the Americo Liberian oligarchy that had established the Liberian state in 1822 (Gberie, 2005:52) and alienated the indigenous population.

The change of the regime did not stop the politics of exclusion but rather, Samuel Doe who took over power in 1980, embarked on partisan politics and favoured the Krahn ethnic group to whom he assigned top administrative and military posts. This generated disaffection and led to an armed rebellion against him by the Gio and Mano marginalised ethnic groups under Charles Ghankay Taylor, a former government official. Doe's regime came to an end in 1990 and triggered a cycle of civil wars. In December, 1989, a small group of 150 armed dissidents under the leadership of Charles G. Taylor tried to overthrow Samuel Doe. This resulted into a civil war that killed about 200, 000 people, (Gberie, 2005:51). In July 1997, Charles Taylor was elected President. Gberie posits, "At the time of the incursions there was a pervasive sense of bewilderment and gloomy anticipation among Liberians, who had been traumatised by violent upheavals and regime brutality for a long time," (Gberie, 2005:51).

Could this be one of the reasons why Charles Taylor was elected president even after leading a bloody rebellion? Liberia's transition from war to peace failed even under the leadership of Charles G. Taylor and in 2001 the country relapsed into war. The international community had to intervene in order to restore peace and security. In August 8, 2003, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was adopted in Accra, Ghana which brought a formal end to the war (TRC Act, n.d.). A National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was formed to administer the country until the elections of October, 2005, (Lamin, 2005:229). The 2005 elections brought to power Africa's first woman President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, (Akopari et al, 2007:75 - 76). The civil wars led to the heinous and gruesome acts that were committed

against humanity. The two decades of violent conflict were characterized by massive killings, displacement, property destruction, sexual violations, extra judicial killings, and economic crimes since natural resources were exploited to finance armed conflicts in the country. Like Sierra Leone, Liberia has suffered under the hands of repressive regimes.

The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Its Mandate

Article 23 of the Liberia Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by the Government of Liberia, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties. The CPA defines the mandate of the Liberia TRC, which is to provide a forum for both victims and perpetrators to share their experiences in an effort to address impunity, facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation. Article 23 specifically states:

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission shall be established to provide a forum that will address issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences, in order to get a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.

In the spirit of national reconciliation, the Commission shall deal with the root causes of the crises in Liberia, including human rights violations.

This Commission shall among other things, recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.

Membership of the Commission shall be drawn from a cross-section of Liberian society. The Parties request that the International Community provide the necessary financial and technical support for the operation of the commission, (The CPA Article 23).

An Act to establish the TRC was enacted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly on May 12, 2005 and in February 20, 2006 and it was inducted by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, (Washington, 2007:3). The TRC was launched in June 22, 2006 and was like in the case of the Sierra Leonean, to investigate the root causes of the crises in Liberia, which led to the massive violation of human rights. The TRC is expected to come up with recommendations that will help in the rehabilitation of the victims, (Liberia Comprehensive Peace Agreement n.d.). There is a school of thought that TRCs are the most prominent complement to criminal justice. This is because of their potential to address mass human rights violations, to foster accountability and to establish the truth about the past thereby enhancing social reconciliation. The recommendations made by the TRC should improve the lives of the victims, promote public debate about the past and enhance a collective national memory and history. Therefore, in the absence of effective justice systems to address the human rights abuses, the TRC was seen as a possibility that would in an inclusive way help Liberians to address the legacies of violence. The TRC is to work with media, women and youth organisations, religious and traditional communities, the civil society and the Liberian Diaspora, (Washington, 2007:2).

Peace, security, unity and reconciliation are key to the attainment of development (TRC Act, n.d.:1). Therefore the focus of the TRC as argued by its Chairman Jerome Verdier is to help Liberians to find a way of living together as one people in one country (Cobban, 2006:3). The TRC is according to Mr. Nathaniel Kwabo, its Executive Secretary, a central element

in the democratisation process that will enable Liberians to achieve sustainable peace and avoid regressing to the nature of abuses and violations that they endured during the war, (Kwabo, 2007:1). The TRC is therefore to investigate human rights violations committed during the 24-year period (1979 – 2003). It has a two-year mandate and is headed by a Chairman and nine commissioners of which four are women. It also has three members of the International Technical Assistance Committee (ITAC) that work directly with the commissioners. The local staff of the TRC are directly employed and paid by the Liberian government. The Liberian TRC has partnerships with non-governmental organisations like the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa, the Open Society Initiative (OSI) in New York, the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and the Open Society Initiative in West Africa (OSIWA), (Washington, 2007:3).

Table 1:

The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners and Other Staff

Name	Designation
Cllr. Jerome J. Verdier, Sr	Chair
Ms. Dede Dolopei	Vice Chairperson
Ms. Oumu K. Syllah	Treasurer
Bishop Arthur F. Kulah	Commissioner
Mr. Kafumba F. Konneh	Commissioner
Cllr. Pear Brown Bull	Commissioner
Rev. Gerald B. Coleman	Commissioner
Mr. John H. T. Stewart	Commissioner
Ms. Massa Washington	Commissioner
Mr. Nathaniel Kwabo	Executive Secretary: A Secretariat for administrative and operational functioning of the TRC
Technical Staff	
An International Technical Advisor Committee (ITAC) consisting of 3 persons. *The TRC is also assisted by different categories of employees in its work.	

Sources: <https://www.trcofliberia.org/>
<https://www.trcofliberia.org/forgive/about/trc-mandate>

Conceptual Issues: Documentation and Dissemination of Information in Post-War Contexts

The Role of the Record in Establishing the Truth

The documentation of war atrocities involves the assessment of individual allegations, analysing the overall evolution of the human rights situation, identifying trends, processing information in a report, recording and storing information (UKWELI handbook: 2000:15). In Liberia, the documentation process is taking place amidst challenges of low levels of education/literacy, limited financial resources, lack of electricity and hence limited Internet access, lack of computers and a functioning information infrastructure. The TRC is expected to come up with a final report, which should be disseminated, to the members of the public and other interested parties. To restore the trust of a greatly traumatised people, the documentation of war atrocities should be utilised to promote an understanding of the causes of conflict in an effort to bring about national healing, reconciliation, freedom of information and a meaningful public sphere. New modes of information dissemination like drama in local languages/locally organised seminars, video/DVD screening to the non-literate societies should be integrated in the dissemination strategy in order to have an all-inclusive process.

Adami contends that the record and its evidential value is the *raison d'être* of any recordkeeping program (Adami, 2007:216). He further argues that accountability leads to trust in the rule of law and that reconciliation is a process that searches for truth, justice, healing and forgiveness (Adami, 2007:214). Repressive governments maintain vast records that are inherited by post-conflict governments and which should aid the reconciliation process. Hence, if captured and well maintained, archival legacies could aid in shaping future humanitarian law since they relate to prosecution of criminal acts (Adami, 2007:214).

Since TRC's are involved in a process of uncovering the truth, the way information is handled is crucial to the credibility of its work. An accurate record of the war atrocities is hoped to prevent future atrocities through the enlightenment of the citizenry and should prevent regression to conflict, (Hayner, 2002: 29). It is argued in the Amnesty International report, that "States should preserve archives and other evidence concerning gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law to facilitate knowledge of such violations to investigate allegations and to provide victims with access to an effective remedy in accordance with international law", (Amnesty International Report 2007:10). It is further argued that, "a truth commission should establish archives for the preservation of documents and evidence. An important legacy of the commission's work, such as archives should be made and remain public after the end of the commission's mandate", (Amnesty International Report, 2007:10).

Factual findings eliminate political speculations and exposure makes it hard for the perpetrators to deny the truth. The truth is the basis of true reconciliation. According to a report by Amnesty International, "The right to know the truth is a collective right that ensures society access to information that is essential for the workings of democratic systems, and it is also a private right for relatives of the victims, which affords a form of compensation...", (Amnesty International report, 2007:3). Exposing the true nature of massive violations that occurred during the conflict ensures that the past is never forgotten. Verdier contends that a people

without a past are a people without a future; and that the past, once forgotten is bound to be repeated (Verdier, 2007:7).

Accountability Issues

The exposure of the massive human rights violations and holding the perpetrators accountable for their deeds marks a new beginning and a break from the past. Like the Chairman of the Liberian TRC argues, “exposing the true nature of massive violations that occurred during the conflict will ensure that the past is not forgotten, thereby undermining the divisions, marginalization and exclusionary policies of the past which found themselves at the core of bad governance in Liberia and lingering social-political discontentment.”

The fight against impunity requires accountability for crimes committed against humanity and the pursuit of justice is important for establishment of the rule of law (Verdier, 2007:23). Adami also argues that the exposure of the atrocities is an acknowledgment of the suffering of the victims and is important in preventing a repetition of future violations (Adami, 2007:214). Will full accountability be achieved in Liberia? Bosire posits “In Liberia, some of the key players in the current government are former warlords who have been largely implicated in human rights crimes”, (Bosire p. 34). The constitution and credibility of the TRC commissioners is also questioned in the Liberian media. The behaviour of some of the commissioners that included fist fighting has not promoted the unity that the TRC is striving for, (Sungbeh, 2008:1). Sungbeh posits,

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who has wielded enormous influence over the group and its members so much that since its inception, the call to summon her to testify before the commission for her alleged role in the civil war has been totally ignored by the political appointees that comprised the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As a result, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is all hype and no substance, and a cover for the politically rich and powerful who are talking peace and reconciliation in public on the one hand, but are also speaking deceit and indecision in private from the other side of their mouths, which leaves the commission open to political manipulation, the cooking of testimonies and the pressuring of witnesses to tell lies to meet the desired goals of this bloated commission.

Hayner is of the view that the TRC documentation contributes to accountability where the judicial system, enough accumulated evidence and political will exist, (Hayner, 2002:29). The TRC documentation cannot be fully utilised if people are not made aware of their right to information and if Liberia fails to enact a Freedom of Information Bill.

Freedom of Information and Access to Information

The Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation is supposed to promote good information management and enhance access to government information by the electorate. It has therefore been adopted in a number of African countries like Angola, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. However, Sebina argues, that according to a study that was done between 2003 and 2006 in countries where the FOI has been enacted, it has been done on weak records management regimes. This has therefore continued to hinder public access to government records, (Sebina, 2007:1). In Liberia, on the 17th of April 2008, the civil society



presented a draft of the Freedom of Information Act to the National Legislature (Press Release, 2008:1) urging the government to expedite the passage of the FOI Bill. It is also important that media has access to government information in order to play its surveillance role in national governance issues but also if it is to be used as an agency in the dissemination of the TRC findings to the people. The right to information is well articulated in both international and national laws. Article 19 in the Declaration of Human Rights and Liberian Constitution, regulates access to information as a human right:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Gränström et. al. 2000) and Article 15 (b) of the Liberian Constitution grants Liberians, “The right to hold opinion without interference and the right to knowledge. It includes freedom of speech and of the press, academic freedom to receive and impart knowledge and information and the right of libraries to make such knowledge available. It includes non-interference with the use of the mail, telephone and telegraph. It likewise includes the right to remain silent. Part (c) of the same article states that “In pursuance of this right, there shall be no limitation on the public right to be informed about the government and its functionaries (Liberian Constitution).

The dissemination of the TRC findings by the media and other civil society organisations will require access to the information contained in the TRC report and the TRC archives. According to Article X on the Reporting and Recommendations of the TRC, Section 47 posits, “The archives of the TRC shall remain in the public domain except those records or documents classified by the TRC as “confidential” which shall remain classified for 20 years following the retirement of the TRC”, (Article X of TRC of Liberia, p. 11). The Chairman of the TRC argued during an interview that I held with him in April 2007, that a comprehensive dissemination strategy has been laid out and that it will embrace the experiences of the past, the culture and the current socio-economic conditions in the country. He also envisages that the recommendation of the TRC will reach each and every Liberian and that transitional justice processes will be taught in the Liberian schools (Svärd, 2007:18 - 19). My view is that dissemination does not take place in a vacuum but will require a functioning information infrastructure if it is to work. Experience in Sierra Leone shows that the same formulation was used about the dissemination of the TRC report but, when it came to the practical work, the report proved very difficult to get hold of even by the research community. Dissemination of information in today’s world is tremendously aided by the use of ICTs which Liberia lacks.

Access to ICTs and Information Dissemination

The President of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, is quoted in Best et al.’s article to have said that “our vision is for Liberia to become a globally competitive knowledge and information society where lasting improvement in social, economic and cultural developments is achieved through effective use of ICT”, (Best et al, 2007:34). The power of information technology today in knowledge and information distribution is well known and researched. Paragraph 4 of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Declaration Principles states that:

“Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organizations. It is central to the Information Society.”

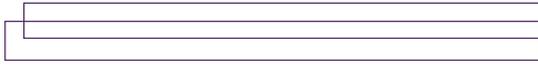
This principle shows the linkage between ICTs and the freedom of expression and opinion (Doria, 2005:30). Globally ICTs have improved the quality of life for those with access. Information and communication skills are a prerequisite in order to engage in the social, economic, cultural and political lives. The developing world is still grappling with the challenges of low literacy levels, access to ICTs and lack of technical skills, (Rassool, 1999:130). Rassool contends that the third phase of industrial development is driven by information and knowledge instead of energy (Rassool, 1999:131). Knowledge and information are central to national development goals in the post-industrial societies. The level of penetration of ICTs in all spheres of the economic and social processes of life is pivotal to the development paradigm. The national economic development requires a highly educated and skilled population, (Rassool, 1999:134). Information is power and through the Internet, access to information has been eased. However, it is not enough with information access; people need to convert information into a knowledge tool that will improve their lives. This requires a government that is ready to engage in awareness building, training and human resource development (Turahi, 2005:57).

An e-Readiness assessment that was done on Liberia by Best et. al established that Internet diffusion is low. In 2004, only one in 1000 Liberians had Internet access. Liberia has no outgoing fibre connectivity and its international connectivity is via satellite (Best et al. 2007:36). The country lacks a national network backbone, which hampers the expansion and availability of the Internet. Internet connectivity is therefore expensive since there is no major gateway provider and individual providers have their own inter gateway facilities. The Internet is therefore only available to a small portion of the Liberian population through Internet cafes or wireless Internet Service Providers (ISPs), (Best et al. 2007:36). The number of people with Internet access is according to Best et al approximately 3,300 people. Liberia released its ICT Policy in April 2006. 85% of the people do not enjoy ready access to ICTs. Since human capacity development is key to Liberia's post-conflict development, educational systems must effectively use ICTs to engage with the global world (Best et al., 2007:37 - 39). The Internet is a medium that enables the distribution of information from one to many and therefore lack of its access will hamper the dissemination of the TRC findings even to those Liberians with information and communication skills.

Challenges of Documenting War Crimes in Post-Conflict States

The TRC Documentation

The documentation of war atrocities and the establishment of the truth, is hoped to enable the people to forgive each other, reconcile and embark on the democratisation of their society. TRCs are empowered and protected by the state, which should take their recommendations seriously (Brahm, 2004:1). TRCs as argued by Hayner have the potential to evaluate institutional responsibilities for the committed atrocities and to outline their weaknesses. They can also suggest changes in laws that have been used to perpetuate the abuse of citizens, (Hayner, 2002:29). This will however require a national strategy that will utilise the archives or the knowledge contained in the TRC report to enlighten the masses about their rights and hence enable them to interrogate the government on the implementation of its recommendations. It is indeed a challenge to disseminate information in a country where a great majority of people are lowly educated. Nevertheless, different



modes of dissemination should be embarked on to give the documentation a meaning by putting it to use and hence enabling it to function as an institutional memory.

The current scepticism towards TRCs is partly due to the fact that the findings are inadequately disseminated to the people. This has created suspicion among the victims of war since the TRC processes in countries like Sierra Leone and S. Africa have failed to address the social injustices and to deliver the promised reparations. Pricilla Hayner, the co-founder of the International Centre for Transitional Justice contends that what weakens the work of the TRCs is lack of political will for governments to implement their recommendations. Hayner sites Sierra Leone as a good example where none of the recommendations have been acted on. President Ernest Bai Koroma pledged in the September 2007 elections to respect the TRC recommendations (Irin, 2008.02.29). In an interview that I had with Ms. Hayner, in Stockholm, March, 2008 she was of the view that:

I think that the model is somehow still wrong and may be the best model would be to have a TRC that ends in a mini-commission which is a full-time commission with staff that has another year, when the TRC commission is over, the report is done, there is no more statement taking, it would work on dissemination, implementation, archiving and preservation, work with parliamentary and policy issues and to use more of the community based staff that TRCs often struggle to fit in. Once you have the information what do you with it? You need the community staff to go back to facilitate the processes of diffusing information into the communities through conversations. May be it is just the wrong model that the TRC drops dead and goes home and there is this sort of vacuum and that is the model that is everywhere right now. The problem is that it would require another commitment of resources but it commission. I am increasingly thinking that has to be the only answer because there are just too many places where people are so frustrated. And then what you are saying is another layer to it but the obvious thing is lack of implementation of recommendations and people not even knowing about the report, (Interview, 2008.03.31).

TRCs need to be implemented in a meaningful way so that the traumatised people can accept them as a solution in the reconciliation and national healing process. Lamin argues that even though TRCs have become fashionable approaches in countries that are transiting from war, the uniqueness of each country specific conflict will need a country specific solution (Lamin, 2005:238). The question to ask is whether the TRC documentation will be utilised by the Liberian government to address the social injustices that caused the war. Information management of TRC archives should be planned for at their commencement in order to effectively include a dissemination strategy, other than as a recommendation at the end of each mission. The South African TRC reconciliation process that has been used as a model for both the Sierra Leonean and Liberian TRCs has not fully delivered the promised reparations to some of the victims as per the recommendation of the TRC. It has only paid nominal amounts to some of the designated victims. This creates bitterness and resentment in a society where the standard of living is still low for some citizens and where class cleavages are highly emphasized. Daly et al further argue that this kind of situation is the reality in most countries where TRCs have been established, citing examples in Latin America and Guatemala, Africa and post-communist Europe where the economic situation for the marginalised has not changed, (Daly et al. 2007:130). Creating awareness about what

the government of Liberia will be in a position to do for the victims of war is crucial to the sustainability of peace and unity. Therefore, information management through information institutions will have to play an important role.

Addressing some of the Post-War Records Management Challenges

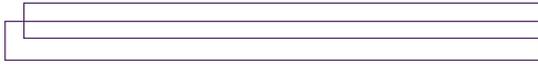
The diffusion of the TRC findings will require functioning information management institutions like the National Archives and libraries because of the need to promote the importance information in the society. However, a visit that was made in 2004 by Dr. Verlone Stone, Indiana University and Elwood Dunn, University of South Africa, was to assess the condition of document repositories and create conditions that would enable access to Liberia's Presidential and National Archives. The visit confirmed that the challenges that existed during the 1980s still persist and the civil war made matters worse because in the 1990s, ex-combatants looted the Centre for National Documents and Records/National Archives building and valuable documents were destroyed (Stone et al 2004:1). Some documents of the early 19th century when the Republic of Liberia was founded were rescued. Today, the National Archives lack preservation materials, training, financial resources and proper storage facilities to cope with all these challenges. Government archives are scattered and the archival organisation of documents, which was done during the 1990s, has not been restored (Stone et al 2004:1).

The papers of the longest serving Liberian President V. S. Tubman that are about 30,000 in number were deteriorating and were to be rescued by a project with an award from the British Library Endangered Archives Program. The collection covers 1944-1950 and 1961 – 1971. The collection is of great importance in understanding the organisation of African Union's early years, the decolonisation era and the West African Diplomacy. The fragile documents were to be air shipped to the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory at Indiana University in the US because Liberia did not have the facilities to deep-freeze and freeze-dry the damp and insect infected documents. After treatment, the documents were to be microfilmed and sent back to Liberia. Micro film copies were to be sent to the University of Liberia, Cuttington University College, Centre for National Documents and Records, National Archives and the Tubman family to enhance local access (The Centre for Research Libraries).

Against this background, transitional societies with fragile institutions need the support of the international community to establish information infrastructure that can enhance the retrieval, dissemination and preservation of information. Since Truth Commissions are set up to investigate misrepresented facts, their documentation is indispensable in an effort to establish the truth. Bearman emphasizes the importance of constructing archives on an agreed ground, which legitimizes the building of a shared memory that would enhance a democratic society (Bearman, 2002:324). The Liberian TRC has according to its Chairman a dissemination strategy but preservation issues of its archives have not yet been addressed.

The Liberian TRC Archives: Preservation and Dissemination

The author of this paper discussed the documentation and archiving of the TRC findings during the course of an interview with the TRC Chairman Jerome Verdier in April 2007 and he argued that it was still in its preliminary stage, (Svärd, 2007:18). During a visit to Liberia in



September 2007, the author's meeting with the TRC commissioners revealed that document handling at the TRC headquarters was not integrated in the work of the TRC and there was no Archivist employed to advise, plan and take care of the documents that are being generated. Benetech, an organization that uses Information Technology to promote human rights is helping the Liberian TRC to improve the quality of statements in the data collection process to better reflect the experiences of statement-givers and to contribute to the TRC's analysis and research. This work is focused towards the final report and of course after all the data has been fed into the database the hardcopies will need to be indexed and taken care of.

The preservation and dissemination of records will pose numerous challenges and these will include lack of information management skills, storage facilities, financial and human resources and the lack of effective dissemination channels. The recording and preservation of information is crucial to the research process of the work of an investigative body. In order to logically organize the generated information, a records management system has to be put in place to ease retrieval and security risks given the sensitivity of the information (UKWELI handbook: 2000:22).

The Liberian TRC is clearly generating compound documents that will require an information infrastructure that will promote the dissemination of its findings. The audiovisual recordings effectively capture the lives of the people but they also pose challenges that a post-conflict country like Liberia is not equipped to handle, (Danielson, n.d.1). While paper records will require storage facilities, digital records will pose technological and financial challenges and will need to be in an environment, which will enable migration (Danielson n.d 1-4). Among the challenges are technology obsolescence, the need to preserve materials in their original formats, the hardship of establishing a faithful copy in the digital realm, changing media and temperature and humidity controlled storage for original tapes, (Cohen n.d.:1).

The Inclusion of the Diaspora Documentation

The Liberian TRC partnered with The Advocates for Human Rights to collect statements from the Liberians in the Diaspora in an effort to create an all-inclusive process. In the US, public hearings have taken place in Minnesota and video clips can be accessed on the Internet. The Advocates for Human Rights have launched further public hearings in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington, D.C. Newark and Atlanta and statement taking is underway in Accra, Ghana and the London, U.K, (The Advocates for Human Rights web page). All the generated documentation is naturally supposed to be taken back to Liberia but the issue is whether Liberia has an information infrastructure that can handle the preservation of all the documentation or whether a plan exists regarding its management. Via the Liberian TRC web page one can link to The Advocates for Human Rights web site and view the video clips but this requires access to a computer and Internet connectivity, which is out of reach of most Liberians.

The Dissemination of the TRC Findings

In the absence of a proper information infrastructure and functioning information institutions and libraries, the dissemination of the Liberian TRC findings might not be easy. Even though the TRC Chairman argues that there is a dissemination strategy in place and that he hopes

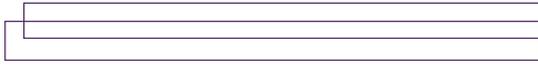
that the TRC recommendations will be effectively disseminated, experience from other TRCs that took place earlier has shown the opposite, (Svärd 2007: 18 – 19). The completed Sierra Leonean TRC work for example showed that even though a recommendation was made regarding the dissemination of the generated documentation, the fact that there was no follow-up institution left in place maintained the generated documentation in packed boxes that were stored away. It must be remembered, that the documentation is based on the contributions of already traumatized people and therefore any kind of neglect should be ethically wrong and against the objective of reconciliation. The dissemination of the Sierra Leone TRC findings has not effectively been carried out. If Liberia is to learn a lesson from the Sierra Leonean TRC, the government and its international partners should budget for an archiving component that will enhance local capacity building in document handling, a systematic arrangement of the archives that will lead to a meaningful use of the generated information. If plans to take care of the documentation were embarked on during the early stages of the TRC work, it would make the handover of the archives to an independent institution easier. This would also promote the dissemination of the findings to the people. The investment in the TRC mission should therefore include a component of an archival function that will see to it that the documents are taken care of in a way that will promote an understanding of the causes of the conflict, promote reconciliation and unity. The Liberians are the owners of these archives and therefore any further use of the information gathered during the process to produce more knowledge should be done in consultation with the Liberian state.

The Human Rights Commission

An Independent Human Rights Institution will be established to take care of the follow-up activities of the TRC and to pursue the implementation of its recommendations (Svärd in News, 2007:20). Article X, Section 46 states that an Independent National Human Rights Commission shall have the responsibility to ensure that the TRC recommendations are implemented (Article X, The Civil society is also expected to play an important role towards achieving this goal. In April, 2008, the Acting Executive Director of the Independent National Commissioner of Human Rights (INCHR) Madam Ellen Z. White urged the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to appoint a commissioner to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (Borteh, 2008:1). The Human Rights Commission will be crucial to the follow-up activities of the TRC.

Analysis of the Documentation Process

This paper has examined the on-going documentation process of the Liberian TRC and highlights the challenges ahead regarding the preservation and dissemination of the TRC findings to the Liberians. The analysis of the literature on the documentation process in Liberia that I have shows growing scepticism as to whether the TRC alone shall deliver justice, lead to reconciliation and promote accountability. Therefore, information will play a crucial role empowering Liberians and thereby enable them understand the TRC process better. If Liberians are to learn from the findings of the TRC in order to avoid regressing to conflict. The media has to operate freely in order to play its watchdog role and to digest information to the masses but also to be able to carry out investigative journalism that holds government officials responsible for the decisions they take on behalf of the electorate. Africa has just witnessed two recently concluded TRCs and that is the South African and the



Sierra Leonean ones. The literature available on both TRCs clearly illustrates that there has been marginal effect on the lives of the poor.

Records management should be addressed at the commencement of the TRC missions. According to the TRC Act, the management of its archives comes at the end of the mission as a recommendation. The integration of the archival process at the beginning of the TRC work would safeguard the rights of the people to access the generated information. In order for TRC missions to be meaningful to the people whose tragedies they document, the findings should be nationally disseminated. The financial constraints, lack of political will and other reconstruction challenges like the creation of functioning government institutions that post-conflict governments are faced with, prevent the implementation of the TRC recommendations. The international community and post-conflict nations should draw lessons from the past TRC processes, especially the most recent ones of South Africa and Sierra Leone in order to enhance the voices of the poor.

TRCs are expensive institutions but are according to the reviewed literature considered to be the most suitable mechanisms in addressing issues of massive violation of human rights. TRCs generate important knowledge that is not fully utilised in countries where it is most needed. Since the TRCs are a sign of legitimacy for new governments, they should be utilised to enhance access to information in a manner that will enhance accountability, reconciliation and national unity. The freedom of information Act will need to be enacted by the Liberian government in order for media to be able to perform its role.

The literature consulted shows that TRCs have had very marginal impact on social injustices. This means that the current model should be revised in order to bring about change and meaning to the lives of the poor. The success of the Liberian TRC documentation process will depend on how well the dissemination of its findings will be effected and the implementation of its recommendations embraced by the government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since Truth Commissions are instruments that usher in new democratic regimes, their findings are crucial in enabling the people to understand the causes of conflict, the reconciliation and the democratisation processes. It should therefore be made accessible to the citizens as stated in the TRC mandates. Issues of information management should be included on the reconstruction agenda of the international community. Future TRC planners should include the suitable modes of diffusing the TRC findings to the members of the society with low literacy levels. Follow-up institutions should not be established years after the TRC has completed its mission but rather mini-commissions or Human Rights Commissions should immediately pursue the follow-up process after the TRC has completed its work. These institutions should have a focused fund to enable them to effectively see to it that the reparations are paid out to the victims and that the government embraces the recommendations. Legal frameworks that can ease information access should also be looked into in order to enable media to play an active role in digesting information to the citizenry. The TRC documentation should be used to formulate economic and social policies that will prevent the post-conflict societies from regressing into war. Given the multilingual nature of the Liberian society, various modes of diffusion of information should be included in the dissemination strategy.

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Our Future's Past: Indigenous Archival Discovery as a Catalyst for New Recording Initiatives in Remote Northeast Arnhem Land

Aaron Corn, *The University of Sydney*

Paper presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia

There is immense interest among Australia's remote Indigenous communities in discovering their recorded history. The introduction of new digital media to these isolated regions this century has enabled copies of rare materials held in cultural heritage collections worldwide to be returned home with unprecedented ease and rapidity. The rediscovery of these materials after many decades of radical socio-economic change in remote Australia has stimulated new awareness of history among these Indigenous communities, and has prompted many local elders to consider the recorded legacy that they themselves will leave for future generations.

This article traces current endeavours among the Yolŋu communities of remote Arnhem Land in Australia's Northern Territory (see Figure 1) to locate the earliest ethnographic records of local community life. It focusses on my research with the Yolŋu elder and academic, Joseph Neparrŋa Gumbula, whose own family history is vividly documented in the films of Cecil Holmes (dir. 1963, 1964), Alice Moyle's sound recordings circa 1962, and various photographs, artifacts and notes dating from 1924 that were collected by AP Elkin, AM McArthur, Donald Thomson, WL Warner, TT Webb and GH Wilkins. I will also explain how this historical research has stimulated new community efforts to comprehensively record endangered Yolŋu performance traditions in alignment with the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia (NRP) (Marett et al. 2006; NRP 2007).

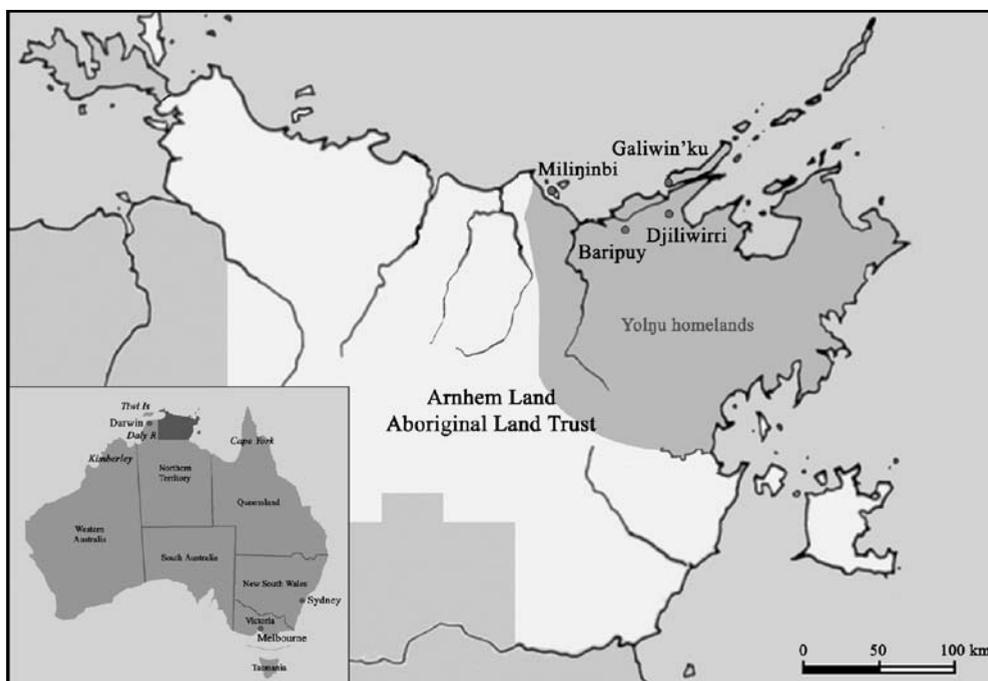
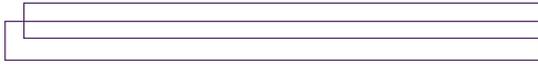


Figure 1. Locations within the Yolŋu homelands and elsewhere in Australia.



Remote corners of regional Australia are home to numerous continuous yet endangered Indigenous performance traditions including yawulyu in central Australia (Barwick, ed. 2000), junba in the Kimberley (Barwick, ed. 2003), wangga in the Daly River district (Lane 2001; Marett 2005), kuwuwala on the Tiwi Islands (Campbell, ed. 2008), kun-borrk in western Arnhem Land (Cooper et al. 2005; Djimarr 2007), emeba and wungubal in southeast Arnhem Land (Moyle & Stokes 1979; Harvey, prod. 1995), and marrga on Cape York (Dixon & Koch, eds 1998). These are nonetheless a small fraction of the Indigenous performance traditions that once existed Australia-wide prior to 1900, and many have yet to be fully recorded. The NRP was founded in 2004 with the aim of addressing this oversight in response to contemporary needs among Indigenous community for better access to their own recorded history (Yunupijū, Langton & Marett 2002). The tradition I work with the most is the manikay 'song' tradition of northeast Arnhem Land.

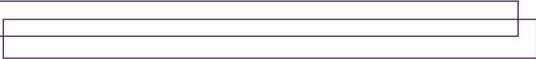
Yolŋu Law

The Manikay tradition is owned by the Yolŋu 'People', the Indigenous people who have inhabited northeast Arnhem Land for countless millennia. Today, there are some 8000 Yolŋu whose homelands extend from the Gove Peninsula in the northeast, west to Cape Stuart, and south to Walker River. There are six contemporary Yolŋu towns in this area. Miliŋinbi, Yirrkala, Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak and Ramanginj were founded by the Methodist Overseas Mission between 1922 and 1973, while Gunyaŋara was established by the Yirrkala community in the 1980s. Gumbula was born at Miliŋinbi and has lived at Galiwin'ku since 1971.

Yolŋu society is an expansive network of some sixty patrilineal mala 'groups' and each owns at least one Manikay series (Zorc 1996; Bagshaw 1998). Membership of each mala passes from father to child in perpetuity. This is also the conduit through which ownership of all traditional hereditary property passes in Yolŋu society. This hereditary property includes tracts of land and water, or wāŋa 'homelands', and incumbent canons of sacred yāku 'names' ŋ, manikay 'songs'ŋ, bungul 'dances' and miny'tji 'designs'ŋ that record ancestral observations of their ecological features and ceremonial associations. Together, these canons of ancestral knowledge and practice are known as maḍayin which describes the 'beauty' of all creation and the 'nature' of all things in it. Names, songs, dances and designs are therefore important assets in Yolŋu society. Together, they provide a ceremonial framework for all legal, political and religious processes observed under rom 'law' (Corn & Gumbula 2006). Yolŋu are profoundly linked to their homelands and ancestors through these hereditary canons of ancestral knowledge and practice, and there is a manikay series for each Yolŋu homeland. Yolŋu communities also recognise the growing importance of documenting their traditions in new ways, and locating their recorded history in ethnographic collections worldwide.

The Search Begins

Gumbula was admitted to leadership within the Gupapuyŋu mala and began to explore his own family's recorded history in 1996. He had heard that his father, Djäwa, had appeared in an old ethnographic film held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra, and so he requested to see a copy. This film, Djälumbu, was directed by Cecil Holmes (1964), and features Djäwa leading a complex Djälumbu ('Hollow Log') funeral ceremony incorporating canonical songs and dances from the series for the



forest homeland of Baripuy (Corn with Gumbula 2005). Later in 2001, Gumbula found an earlier documentary recounting his father's life story, *Faces in the Sun* (Holmes, dir. 1963), at the National Film and Sound Archives in Canberra.

In 2001, Gumbula commenced his research at Museum Victoria in Melbourne where he found thousands artifacts, paintings and original photographs documenting his family's history in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Collected by Donald Thomson (2004) and others, these materials include rare photographs of Djäwa and his father, *ṛarritjṛarritj*, at Miliṛinbi dating from 1937. In 2003, Gumbula joined me and our director, Marcia Langton, as a Senior Fellow in the Australian Indigenous Studies Program at the University of Melbourne, and his research spread into related collections including those held privately by former mission and teaching staff at Miliṛinbi.

In 2007, Gumbula and I received funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC) to start new research into photographs and other records held in the University of Sydney Archives which had never before been seen in Arnhem Land (Gumbula, Corn & Mant 2008). Dating from 1927, they include materials collected by the second serving minister at Miliṛinbi, TT Webb, and the first anthropologist to study Yolṛu culture, WL Warner (1969), as well as later materials collected in the 1940s and 1950s by AP Elkin and AM McArthur. These too depict Gumbula father and father's father at Miliṛinbi and Galiwin'ku, and portray a history of Arnhem Land that now stands at the very edge living memory. This project brought Gumbula to the University of Sydney, where I held my own ARC Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship, as its first ARC Indigenous Research Fellow. It stands as the only ARC project in history to be led by a Yolṛu elder. The only earlier records of Yolṛu culture known to exist are those collected by GH Wilkins (1929) which date from 1924. I commenced research into Wilkins' materials at the British Museum and the British Museum of Natural History in London in collaboration with Louise Hamby from the Australian National University (ANU) in 2008 (Peterson, Allen & Hamby, eds 2008).

Filling the Silence

Gumbula's capacity to investigate these materials stems from his intimate knowledge of local families and their histories, his ability to consult multilingually and cross-culturally with local elders and experts elsewhere, and his consummate knowledge as a duly-appointed elder of Yolṛu law and ceremonies including song, dance, design and linguistic traditions. This is where our research into collections and our present efforts to comprehensively record of Yolṛu performance traditions intersect.

It was 2004 when Gumbula realised that the decades of photographic evidence of Yolṛu ceremonial conduct and community life was not reflected in the existing recordings of Yolṛu performance repertoires. Peter Toner (2003) of ANU had recently repatriated digital copies of sound recordings by Alice Moyle circa 1962 which included Djäwa and his brother, Boṛawuy, singing only a limited selection of subjects from the Baripuy forest repertoire (Moyle, ed. 1967: 4A, tracks 1–2). The documentation of this repertoire in Holmes' films was also incomplete. Gumbula and his siblings were greatly inspired to be able to hear their forebears perform manikay in this way, but wished their repertoire had been recorded in its entirety (Gumbula & DeLargy Healy 2004). Shortly after, they decided to enlist my help as a producer to do just this for their descendants' benefit. Therefore in 2004 and 2005, we travelled both as colleagues and adoptive family to the most sacred Gupapuyṛu homeland, Djiliwirri, to digitally record a range of materials including photographs, films and geo-data,

and of course, a full recording of the Baripuy manikay repertoire spanning all of its subjects in all possible rhythmic modes (see Tables 1–2) (Corn & Gumbula 2007). While these subjects may look like a field-spotters guide to the various natural species and phenomena found at Baripuy, they nonetheless record profound observations of this homeland’s ecology and its ceremonial associations that Yolŋu trace back to the original *waŋarr* ‘ancestors’ who named, shaped and populated it.

With such a wealth of photographic and other materials stretching back over eight decades being returned to Arnhem Land, the idea of recording this repertoire for the NRP archive was far from alien to my Yolŋu collaborators. Yolŋu have long had their own oral mechanisms from ensuring against their loss. Indeed, the very repertoire we were recording once belonged to the Wora mala who succumbed to pastoralists nearly a century ago. In what Gumbula has described as a traditional way of archiving, it passed into the care of his own mala, the Gupapuyŋu, who recognised the Wora as a *märipulu* ‘mother’s mother’s group’ (Gumbula & Corn 2007).

Table 1. The order of subjects and rhythmic modes in the Baripuy manikay series.

subject number and name	rhythmic modes performed			
1. <i>galigali</i> ‘boomerang’		ii	iii	
2. <i>yininya</i> ‘barbed spear’		ii	iii	
3. <i>bilitjpilitj</i> ‘red-winged parrot’		ii	iii	
4. <i>dhurrpinda</i> ‘plum’		ii	iii	
5. <i>marmu</i> ‘possum’			iii	
6. <i>wunymbul</i> ‘possum-fur string’	i		iii	iv
7. <i>lorŋpu</i> ‘sulphur-crested cockatoo’		ii	iii	
8. <i>gana’kana</i> ‘stringybark sapling’		ii	iii	
9. <i>gakundurr</i> ‘yam’		ii	iii	
10. <i>bepi</i> ‘banded fruit dove’		ii	iii	
11. <i>wurrpan</i> ‘emu’	i		iii	iv
12. <i>gapu-raypiny</i> ‘freshwater stream’			iii	
13. <i>djarramumu</i> ‘land snail’		ii	iii	
14. <i>laparr</i> ‘dove’		ii	iii	
15. <i>garrtjambal</i> ‘red kangaroo’		ii	iii	
16. <i>burrmalala</i> ‘cyclone’	i	ii	iii	
17. Murayana, an ancestral ghost	i	ii	iii	
18. <i>wärrarra</i> ‘red sunset’		ii	iii	
19. <i>biyay</i> ‘large goanna’	i		iii	
20. <i>wora</i> ‘fin grass’		ii	iii	
21. <i>wokara</i> ‘small frog’		ii	iii	
22. <i>nyaŋura</i> ‘freshwater tortoise’		ii	iii	
23. <i>djewul</i> ‘freshwater weed’	i		iii	iv
24. <i>ḍakawa</i> ‘yabby’			iii	v
25. <i>mayku</i> ‘paperbark tree’	i		iii	iv
26. <i>burala</i> ‘darter’	i		iii	iv

27. <i>djalumbu</i> 'hollow log'	i	iii	iv
28. <i>manbiri</i> 'speckled freshwater eel-tailed catfish'	i	iii	iv
29. <i>ganahdharr</i> 'heron'		iii	v
30. <i>garraunun</i> 'hammerhead shark'	i	iii	iv
31. <i>dhangi</i> 'quince'		iii	v
32. <i>gurrutjutju</i> 'kite'		iii	v

rhythmic mode	rhythm	tempo
i. <i>rengitj</i> (body)		♩ = 110
ii. <i>dhuḍi-nhirrpan</i> (foundation)		♩ = 74
iii. <i>wana-waṅa</i> (branch)		♩ = 78
iv. <i>ḍhirrpuma</i> [named for its opening didjeridu rhythm]		♩ = 88
v. <i>marrtjina-märrma</i> (second journey)		♩ = 130

Figure 2. Rhythmic modes performed in the Baripuy manikay series.

What We Leave Behind

Gumbula and I have now fully translated this series and our recordings from Djiliwirri are scheduled to be released as an album in the new NRP series, The Indigenous Music of Australia. Since 2005, I have also collaborated with Yolŋu elders to record different manikay series owned by the Birrkili, Djapu' and Gumatj mala, and have standing invitations to record, document and archive others yet. The transformation of recording media from wax cylinder in Warner's time to solid state hard drives in ours has improved our ability to capture and repatriate high quality sound recordings to Indigenous communities with unprecedented ease and rapidity. There are nonetheless serious budgetary and infrastructural constraints on the NRP that must be addressed before all current Indigenous community calls for digital recording and archiving initiatives in their localities can be met (Corn 2007). Allan Marett and Linda Barwick, whose work towards the NRP has involved establishing sound archives in remote communities such as Belyuen and Wadeye in collaboration with the Northern Territory Library, have commented that even these modest facilities now require additional funding for maintenance and upgrading to keep them operational (Marett with Barwick & Corn 2008).

In our various conversations and presentations together, Gumbula has often said, 'Before, there was empty space where nothing was written. What will we leave behind for the community?' The recent introduction of digital recording technologies to remote Indigenous communities in the form of devices as ubiquitous as mp3 players and digital camera has certainly stimulated local elders to consider what they themselves can do to ensure that their traditional knowledge and practices are recorded and securely-accessible to future generations. However, in our own experience, there are also immediate community benefits to be had from the process of recording performance traditions on remote homelands like Djiliwirri. In essence, all kinds of recording and archiving activity can stimulate all kinds of

interest and action in local performance traditions. Indigenous community investment in the recording, documentation and archiving process not only creates lasting records of Indigenous performance traditions, but can also stimulate lasted youth engagement with tradition as a whole. Further information about our work can be found on the NRP and University of Sydney websites (U Sydney 2007; NRP 2007).

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Islands Archiving

*Richard Moyle, Archive of Maori and Pacific Music, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Paper presented at the IASA 2008 Conference, Sydney, Australia*

By its very nature, audio archiving tends to focus on things -- recordings -- and how best to conserve them. That kind of archive is in effect a scientific institution. But the contents of archival recordings were created, by and large, by humans and human interaction occurs whenever access to those recordings is given. That kind of archive is in effect a social institution. Clearly, those two statements are extreme, and archives routinely combine scientific and social responsibilities in order to be relevant in and beyond the 21st century. In this paper I speak of audio archiving in five Pacific regions where my own archive has played both a scientific and social role, and then offer some comments -- and a request.

Audio archives in the Pacific are few and far between. Most are incorporated within the libraries of radio stations.

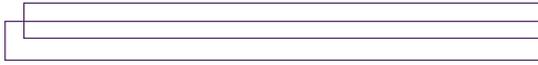
Tonga

I lived in Tonga for some 18 months in the early 1970s, undertaking ethnomusicological fieldwork. Tonga has no formally constituted audiovisual archive, and relies on the holdings of its government radio station (A3Z) for access to recordings dating back no more than 47 years. I spent many days at A3Z, where I had permission from five successive station managers to examine and copy any of their archival recordings. These mono analogue tape recordings had no documentation other than a date, place and recording occasion, and it was said that only the senior announcer was familiar with the details of their contents. Worse still, the station had a policy of erasing entire reels whenever they had insufficient blank stock to continue their ongoing recording activities. I dubbed 20 hours of archival material dating back as far as 1961, and deposited them, along with my own collection in the Archive of Maori and Pacific Music. (In this paper, I'll refer to my institution as simply "the archive".)

In 2001 a technician from A3Z spent three weeks at the archive in Auckland being trained in digitisation. The station manager accepted our offer to keep an off-site security copy of the CDs generated in those three weeks, and that permission was duly written into the contract that both parties signed. In 2007, the station manager informed us that all the CDs copied as part of that exercise had been removed by an employee, and they requested a duplicate copy -- which we duly provided.

Niue

Niue, a single-island state in free association with New Zealand, has had its owner-operated Radio Sunshine for some 25 years. In 1984 I undertook a UNESCO-funded survey of Niuean music and, in a country of some 1600 persons, was able to interview every adult over the age of 40. At that time, Radio Sunshine had a supply of reel tapes but no working tape deck to play them, only a cassette deck. I offered to provide them with a cassette copy of their archival recordings, and duly did so. In 2006, the Niuean Cultural Centre, which incorporated Radio



Sunshine, informed me that a cyclone had devastated their building, including all its audio recordings, and asked whether we knew of any recordings made on the island. We were able to supply them with a copy of my own recordings, as well as a further copy of their own archival tapes. Perhaps significantly, the present Cultural Centre staff said they were quite unaware of the existence of the earlier set of cassette tapes.

Samoa

Samoa, formerly Western Samoa, has a single government radio station. 2AP. In the 1960s I spent more than two years in Samoa recording traditional music. I also copied from 2AP songs recorded by the then New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) in the 1940s on 78 rpm discs. My own recordings and those from 2AP were deposited in the archive. In the 1990s I discovered that the old 78s were no longer in existence. I also discovered that the successor to the NZBS -- Radio New Zealand Sound Archives -- had no information about these recordings, and no copy of their own. In 1999 I repatriated to Samoa copies of the dubs I had made 35 years earlier. The event was covered by radio, television and local newspapers. And then something very interesting happened.

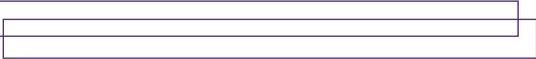
Among the old material dubbed were songs dating back to a nationalist movement of the 1930s called Mau (lit. opinion), whose principal focus was the removal of New Zealand administration of Samoa. When 2AP took the copies of these songs and began broadcasting them in 1999, the phone lines ran hot: the descendants of people who agreed with the political opinion in their lyrics asked for them to be played again. But the descendants of those who opposed the contents of the lyrics insisted that broadcast be prohibited, even to the point of making personal threats against station staff. The Minister of Broadcasting eventually intervened and stopped all further broadcast.

This incident highlights a broader issue among Pacific nations -- that there is no such thing as completely objective history. The history of people is essentially the history of politics, and no matter how benign the intentions behind an exercise in repatriation, even the repatriation of songs, we are dealing with essentially political material which has the enduring ability to re-ignite old loyalties and old wounds. And we -- as people involved in making available now recordings from the past -- need to be mindful of variation of response, even unwelcome variation of response, in the recipient country.

We in our archive also gave training to a senior technician in 2AP in 2003. And this was so successful that the station wanted our audio conservator to travel to Samoa and train the entire technical staff; we are still awaiting news about funding for that project.

Cook Islands

In the late-1990s we were informed about boxes of analogue tapes in the Cook Islands Museum --- leftovers from when the government radio station was privatised and replaced by a cassette-only private station. Those boxes, we were told, were languishing in non-air-conditioned premises. As with Samoa and Tonga, we offered a digitisation package to the Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Affairs, who managed the museum where those analogue



tapes were located. But, unlike Samoa and Tonga, the deal fell through after our contact in the Ministry insisted first that the contract be based on Cook Islands law rather than New Zealand law, and then that all contract monies (for travel, air cargo, insurance, accommodation, training and materials) be sent to him personally and in advance. On formal advice from my university, I declined. The fate of that particular tape collection is unknown, although a colleague visiting some years later reported that the reels were still sitting in the museum.

Papua New Guinea

In 2008, the archive brought to Auckland the audio technician from the Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies for three weeks of training in digitisation. Unlike earlier visiting technicians, this one brought with him a wide cross-section of types of materials stored in Port Moresby. The archive of the Institute consists of a shipping container only partly under cover, with an air conditioner strapped to the side. During the power cuts for which Port Moresby is justifiably infamous, temperatures inside the container rise to levels damaging to analogue tapes.

For the Institute, we were able to provide not only training but also two reconditioned Revox tape decks, and a multi-speed turntable, as well as the same computer on which the technician received his training. Using equipment he was already familiar with, the technician could carry on his work in his home environment.

But not quite the happy ending. When these goods arrived in Papua New Guinea, the Institute was charged 9000K duty. The Customs Department did not doubt that they were indeed a gift to the Institute, but there was no legislation which allowed the duty-free importation of gifts to a government department.

Conclusion

Most of us are well aware that the contents of our archival recordings may constitute cultural property, and that cultural expectations can be just as influential as legal requirements. Let me relate one more phenomenon all too common in the Pacific -- of a radio station manager considering that the contents of the station tape archive, being under his/her personal jurisdiction, represented his/her own personal property and therefore could legitimately be removed when that manager's employment there ended. At least, that's how the rumours interpret the sudden disappearance of tapes from archive shelves at the time that the manager leaves.

Radio (and television) station staff routinely make unauthorised copies of material for friends and acquaintances, as well as for others who formally pay for the materials. Only rarely are prosecutions for piracy brought. When weighed up against company policy, pressures of family and friends sometimes are prioritised. And it's not called 'theft', but rather 'love for family'.

Against these kinds of factors and influences, there is little that archivists can do other than attempt to have duplicate files kept in a remote location. Our own archive is well placed

geographically to offer such a service. We are a single plane ride away from all but one of the countries I've mentioned in this paper, and Pacific Islanders resident in New Zealand now number more than 250,000, some 16% of the total national population.

Our archive is also well placed historically because of New Zealand's long history of association with islands of the South Pacific. Three island nations -- the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau -- enjoy what is formally called "a free association with New Zealand", a situation giving the inhabitants certain privileges, including New Zealand citizenship as a birthright. Additionally, the UNESCO-funded 'Territorial Survey of Oceanic Music' which recorded representative samples from 11 little-recorded part of the Pacific between 1984 and 1993, has broadened the Archive's profile among Pacific nations.

In 2009, management of the Archive will move from the Faculty of Arts to the University Library, which for many years has declared an interest in incorporating it into its own network of specialist services.

I think this will be a happy marriage, since both parties see practical benefits:

- the archive has direct access to professional cataloguers and cataloguing software,
- the archive will also have access to experts in digital technology willing to apply their skills to archive purposes and projects, particularly for print documentation of audio collections.
- the archive will be able to afford to put the archive catalogue online, complete with 10-second sound bytes of each item to allow users to confirm their selections before requesting copies.

Let me summarise some of the challenges throughout the Pacific that audio archives face.

challenges of place

There are ongoing issues of high temperature, high humidity, unreliable power supply, non-air-conditioned premises -- all of which contribute to comparatively rapid degradation of recordings and equipment;

challenges of space

Island archives are usually attached to a radio station or cultural centre; they are small, and their contents frequently uncatalogued (relying on the familiarity and memory of individual staff members to locate specific material);

challenges of geography

The remoteness of Pacific islands nations prevents easy or fast access to equipment repairs, or training facilities, or professional advice on archiving;

challenges of size

The economies of scale work against Pacific Island archival practices; they represent a low priority in government budgets largely focusing on economic growth;

challenges of policy

Radio station archives consist almost entirely of recordings made either in the studio or -- more commonly -- live in the field

Station policy may prioritise ongoing recordings and have no archival policy at all;

in the pre-digital era (which, in fact, is what we tend to focus on) at least one station had limited funds to buy blank tape stock, and so resorted to erasing and re-recording tapes in an ad hoc manner.

But perhaps the biggest challenge is the

challenge of culture

logic: If the archive is intended to serve the people, then the contents should be freely available to the people. The results:

- family interests may be prioritised over best practice or company policy
- cultural influences may determine what is or is not recorded or archived

I conclude with a request:

It would be useful for IASA to consider the possibility of larger audio institutions adopting a Pacific Islands archive

- to offer practical and technical advice in response to particular archiving situations or when purchasing new equipment
- to be a supportive name that could be invoked in funding applications for equipment;
- and perhaps also to be a location offering further or ongoing technical training under some form of secondment programme.

So, what about it -- Library of Congress, ABC, BBC, National Film and Sound Archives, National Archives of Australia?

Will the 2008 conference theme -- 'no archive is an island' -- be of interest only for this week as a topic for academic debate in the comfortable insulation of our Sydney venue here? Or will the social dimensions of ethnographic archiving, and the social responsibilities inherent in managing Pacific Islands cultural property motivate you to motivate your institution to offer practical help where practical help is sorely needed, now?

Regional Archives and Community Portals

Paul Trilsbeek and Dieter van Uytvanck, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

The Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, hosts one of the largest digital archives of linguistic resources. Many of those resources are unique recordings of languages that are highly in danger of becoming extinct or in some cases are already no longer spoken. The MPI archive is the central archive for the DOBES²² endangered languages documentation projects funded by the German Volkswagen Foundation²³.

Most linguists working with endangered languages see it as an important aspect of their documentation work to return recorded material back to the speech community in some form, either for language revitalization efforts or just as a moral obligation to return to the communities what belongs to them. The medium of choice for returning material to the communities very much depends on the technology that is available within a particular community and can vary from printed books to CDs/DVDs to online material via the internet. David Nathan calls this particular dissemination of material in various forms mobilisation (Nathan 2006).

Preparing such material for any medium in a useful form requires a lot of knowledge of the particular community and besides that involves a lot of editing and design work. In the case of rich interactive multi-media presentations specific skills are also required to technically implement these presentations, which often means that the linguists need to seek help of technicians to collaborate on the creation of such presentations. For a large archive such as the one at MPI, it is practically impossible to offer the creation of specialized rich multi-media presentations as a standard service.

The MPI archive however does provide two services to facilitate the “repatriation” of linguistic and cultural material to those communities that have internet access at their disposal. One of these services is the establishment of so-called “regional archives”; the other service is to help with the creation of specialized community web-portals.

Regional Archives

The MPI has been involved in the creation of technical infrastructure for digital archiving for about 10 years now. During this time, a framework has been developed that consists of a number of components that can roughly be categorized in three groups:

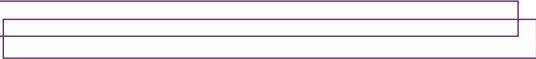
- Tools for linguists to work with their primary data
- Tools for archiving the resources including the creation of metadata descriptions
- Tools for accessing archived material in various ways via the web (browsing, searching, visualizing)

Using this same framework, called the Language Archiving Technology (LAT) framework²⁴,

²² <http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES>

²³ <http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de>

²⁴ <http://www.lat-mpi.eu>



the MPI started an initiative to set up regional archives in locations closer to the areas where the recordings were originally made. This serves a number of purposes:

- Speeding up regional internet access to the archived material that is relevant for that area
- Giving the local researchers an autonomous archive in which they can store whatever resources they want and optionally provide copies to the central archive in Nijmegen to profit from its long-term preservation strategies
- Breaking the almost colonial trend of archiving cultural heritage far away in western archives, which may result in more involvement and interest in archiving cultural heritage from within the communities themselves
- Making the institutions that host the regional archives part of an international grid of archives, which may facilitate further international collaboration, funding requests etc.

These regional archives cannot be placed just anywhere, there are some criteria that need to be fulfilled in order to make them possible. First of all there needs to be a reasonable technological infrastructure present with a reliable broadband internet connection. Also there needs to be local staff who on the one hand can keep the server running from a technical point of view and on the other hand can perform the tasks of an archive manager, helping depositors to put material into the archive and to organize the archive in a consistent way. This generally means that the regional archives are placed within research institutes, museums, or other governmental organizations that can provide the necessary infrastructure.

The procedure of establishing these regional archives varies, but always involves the purchase of a server with sufficient storage capacity. Either the MPI purchases this server in the Netherlands, configures it completely and sends it over to the hosting institution, or the hosting institution purchases the server locally and connects it to the internet and then installation and configuration happens remotely over the internet from Nijmegen. After the server has been installed generally an archive manager from MPI visits the location to give training to both the technicians/archive managers as well as the people who will be working with the archive material. Until now, 6 regional archives have been set up and another 5 are planned for 2009 (Fig 1).

Besides for the regional archives, the LAT framework has also been used within a European project on distributed access management (DAM-LR²⁵). One important component still missing from the LAT framework is a synchronization component to automatically synchronize data between different LAT archives. This component is being worked on, but until now the synchronization needs to be done manually.

²⁵ <http://www.dam-lr.eu>

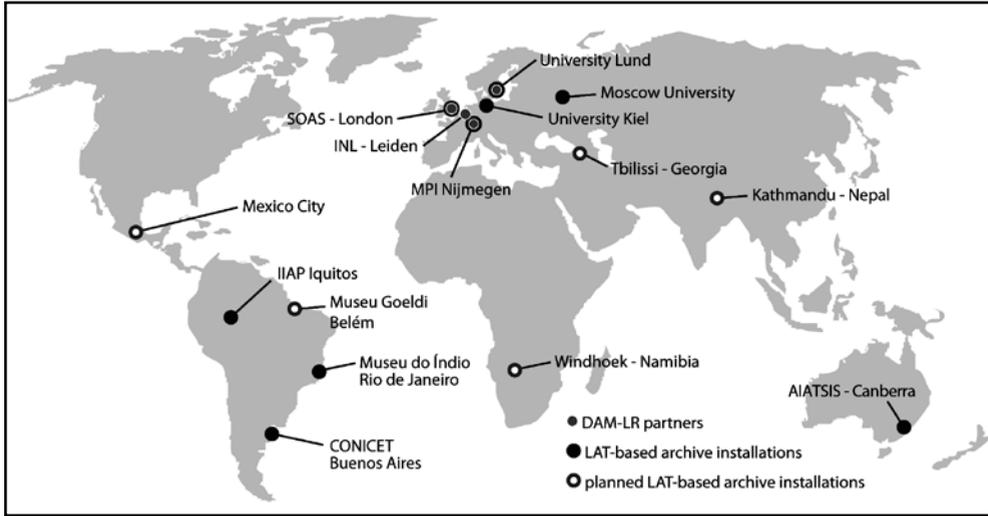


Fig. 1 Established and planned LAT-based archive installations.

Community Portals

The LAT archiving framework makes all archived resources available via the web for authorized users. The standard user interfaces offer extensive browse and search facilities within the metadata catalog, which are suitable for linguists or other specialist users who know what they are looking for, but are less ideal for the general public and the speech communities. To make material available online in a form that is more suitable to the speech communities, the MPI together with some of the DOBES documentation projects have started to develop customized community web portals. The idea behind these portals is that a selection of archived material is presented within an attractive and easy to use website, possibly also in the language of the community. Since internet access and access to computers in remote areas are becoming more common in certain parts of the world, this way of returning cultural material to the communities is becoming a feasible option.

One key feature of the community portals is that they are not static web sites, but dynamic sites that make use of the archived resources and the metadata catalog. Metadata queries are defined within the portal in order to present certain categories of resources that are in the archive. Because these queries are performed on the fly whenever a user clicks on a certain link in the portal, new additions to the archive will automatically become part of the portal if the metadata descriptions match any of the defined queries. This makes the portals almost maintenance free once they have been set up.

The querying of the metadata catalog from an external web portal is made possible through the implementation of a REST (Representational State Transfer) Web Service (Fielding and Taylor 2002). This Web Service makes use of a fairly simple protocol to send a number of query parameters as arguments in a URL to the server and then returns the search results in XML format. This XML result can then be further transformed into nicely formatted lists within the particular dynamic web environment that is used for the portal. In the case of the MPI portals, they are implemented in a content management system called Plone²⁶. Plone

²⁶ <http://plone.org>

is an open source content management system written in the Python²⁷ language, it has a very active developers' community working on all sorts of extensions and it is fairly easy to create customized content types for specific purposes. This makes it an easy platform to integrate dynamic content coming from Web Services such as our search Web Service.

One of the most important aspects of the community portals is the layout and graphical design. For this, a lot of input is needed from the researchers working on the languages since they have more knowledge of what works well for their particular community. On the other hand, only few researchers are also highly skilled web developers or graphic designers, so generally a compromise needs to be made between a design proposal from the researchers, some common usability principles for web site design and possibly some extra design work from a graphic designer. The researchers also need to propose the particular metadata queries that they want to be present in the portal.

The first community portal that was implemented was the Beaver (Dane-zaa) community portal (Fig. 2). Beaver is a language spoken in British Columbia and Alberta in Canada by some 150 remaining speakers. The documentation team has come up with a graphical design that contains images that are of cultural significance to the Beaver community and they have also selected categories of resources that are important in the Beaver culture as well as categories of resources that can be used for educational purposes. The portal is currently still being filled with more content and will be finalized in the next few months.



Fig. 2 Front page of the Beaver (Dana-zaa) community portal as designed by the Beaver documentation team²⁸

Obviously for many regions of the world the presentation of material via the web is not yet the most effective way to “repatriate” cultural heritage. The OLCAP project (McConvell

²⁷ <http://python.org/>

²⁸ <http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects/beaver>



and Lee 2008) that is being carried out at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra, Australia, is a pilot project to investigate the extent to which this is true for a number of areas in northern Australia. These areas have access to the internet but the bandwidth is limited and internet access is only available to the community members in places with a public function such as the language center in Katherine, Northern Territory and the library in Lockhart River, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. Within the OLCAP project, a regional LAT archive has been set up as well as two community portals using the same methodology as described above. Initial results have shown that the available bandwidth in the pilot locations at this moment is good enough for presenting audio material but is not adequate for presenting video material of reasonable quality. Whether the communities in the pilot project appreciate this way of accessing their recordings still remains to be seen, however with the advances being made in broadband internet access in remote areas and the success of web sites such as YouTube also among young indigenous people, one can expect that some years from now the internet will play an important role in returning recordings about endangered languages and cultures back to the communities.

A community portal can either be combined with a regional LAT archive installation, such as in the case of the OLCAP project, or it can be configured to access the archived resources at the central archive in Nijmegen.

Conclusions

The establishment of regional archives can be an important step to help preserve recordings of disappearing languages and cultures. Having an archive present near to the areas where the languages are being recorded will improve access to the resources and may increase interest in documenting endangered languages and cultures both within and outside of the language communities.

Creating community web-portals is becoming a more viable option for returning recordings of endangered languages and cultures to their communities. The advances in broadband internet access in remote locations and the familiarization of members of the language communities with websites such as YouTube will only increase the viability of this medium.

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McConvell, Patrick and Lee, Jason (2008), "OLCAP: The On-Line Languages Community Access Pilot Project in Northern Australia", *International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives Annual Conference 2008*, Sydney, Australia.

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The Challenges of Web Access to Archival Oral History in Britain²⁹

Rob Perks, Curator of Oral History, British Library Sound Archive, London & Visiting Professor in Oral History, University of Huddersfield

We have arrived at a turning point in the development of oral history where access to and control of the interview data we create and collect are creeping out of our ownership and control. We have long debated the nature of that 'ownership': recognising that interviews are a co-construction in which 'shared authority' is important; and emphasising the need for informed consent and an ethical and legal framework delineating copyright ownership, usage and access conditions.³⁰ But until recently we - as archivists and academics and 'keepers' of the material - have more or less continued to exercise control over access to those interviews. Having decided what to 'preserve for posterity' we have largely determined who we will allow into public reading rooms and libraries; we have chosen which extracts from the interview data we wish to present in a lecture or publish in a book or broadcast as a radio programme. Secondary users or readers who have managed to negotiate access to the original data sources have then often been faced with a host of restrictions on the use they can make of the data: through poor or non-existent catalogues; inadequate content documentation; restrictions on copying transcript extracts; the high cost and degree of difficulty in obtaining copies of recordings for analysis back at base; tortuous copyright clearances prior to published use; a risk-averse public sector culture, and so on. In short we have not made it easy for people to get at our oral history holdings, and we have frequently been doing this in the name of our interviewees, to protect them, even though it is rarely clear what we are protecting them from and there are virtually no reported cases of abuse of access to oral history materials for undesirable ends. And we could, of course, carry on in this mode. But if we do we would be alienating new generations of potential users of our collections and, as funding tends to follow users, we would be threatening our own existence as holders of oral history data. Comprehensive web access is unstoppable and we ignore it at our peril.

Yet access to archived oral history data via the web completely transforms this guardianship relationship, which naturally makes us very uncomfortable as creators and curators, partly because we fear a marginalisation of our own role as conduit, explainer and interpreter. Online access to oral history interviews in their entirety sidesteps the archivist-gatekeeper and we now agonise about what we can do to reintroduce our presence through contextual information, site user agreements, copyright warnings, passworded access and other registration procedures. Not that I am necessarily arguing against any of these things, merely urging us to reflect on our own motives. For if we are serious about welcoming the web as an unprecedented democratic opportunity for disseminating hidden voices, challenging stereotypical historical views, and empowering people to share their own experiences with new worldwide audiences, regardless of income, mobility and expertise, why are we

²⁹ This article is based on a paper first presented as part of a panel about web access to oral history at the International Oral History Association conference in Sydney in 2006: see

www.une.edu.au/ioha2006/conference%20program.html [all cited websites accessed January 2009]. I have since benefited from useful conversations with Karen Brewster, Sherna Gluck, Kevin Bradley and Mike Frisch. Thanks also to Peter Findlay, ASR Project Manager, and Janet Topp Fargion for their helpful comments. I use the word 'web' in this article as shorthand for the World Wide Web and the Internet.

³⁰ Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, second edition, 2006, 'Critical developments: introduction', pp. 1-13.

attempting to reintroduce barriers to access? Why are we hesitant? We evoke interviewee uncertainty about web access, but how much do we actually know about interviewee understanding of the web? We think of the web as providing a virtual version of the access we provide on-site and tend too often to think in a rather linear way: how much have we reflected on the new creative uses that can be made of that data, through powerful search engines, linkages, and the blending of related images and textual sources?³¹ And yet, perhaps caution is required: how much do we actually know about online users and what they want? More crucially, what do we know about whether mass access via the web will change the nature of the interview relationship itself?

What struck me most forcibly when we, at the British Library Sound Archive, embarked on our own first mass digitisation and web-access project six years ago, was how little reflective writing and thinking there was at that time on oral history and the internet. In 2009 the situation has not changed a great deal: the skills and knowledge base amongst oral historians and heritage professionals around digitisation and web access remains woefully poor. Standards have been slow to emerge and what little agreed best-practice there is relating to consent issues, retrospective renegotiation of rights, site-user agreements and so on, has been remarkably little-debated. A few pioneers – such as the Jukebox project at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Sherna Gluck's Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive³² – stand out but otherwise the debate has hardly begun. In getting to grips with the key issues it seemed to me that we needed to better assess the web presence for oral history in Britain, so in the summer of 2005 we worked with a postgraduate student in archives and records management at University College London to carry out the first-ever survey.³³

Survey of web-based oral history in the UK

The survey found 265 UK-based websites presenting, promoting or giving access to oral history of which 36% were local community groups, 12% were museums, 12% national bodies and special interest groups, 11% from higher education, 7% archives and record offices, 5% corporate/business, 3% libraries (including the British Library) and 3% schools.³⁴ This broadly reflects known key areas of oral history activity in the UK,³⁵ and the survey noted that very few of these sites were dedicated only to oral history: oral history frequently featured alongside several other services or activities. More surprising was the finding that only 85 of the 265 sites had any actual oral history content (audio or transcript), the remainder merely describing oral history projects or collections.

³¹ Michael Frisch, 'Oral history and the digital revolution: toward a post-documentary sensibility' in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, second edition, 2006, pp. 102-114.

³² <http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/jukebox/PJWeb/pjhome.htm> and <http://salticid.nmc.csulb.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/OralAural.woa/>

³³ Heather Macleod, 'Web-based oral history in the UK: a study', MA dissertation, University College London, September 2005. The websites she studied were accessed in June-August 2005. Oral history was defined as involving the spoken word: projects only concentrating on written reminiscences were excluded. I am grateful to Heather, not only for all her hard work on the survey but also for permission to quote from her thesis.

³⁴ As 70% of the sites surveyed had no indication of when they had been created or last updated it is impossible to date the currency of information on every site. It is fair to assume that many lack sustainable resources for regular updating.

³⁵ By contrast Karen Brewster's survey of US oral history sites found that over half were university-based: Karen Brewster, 'Internet access to oral history recordings: finding the issues', 2000, 'Research Results' at www.uaf.edu/library/oralhistory/brewster1/index.html.

Only fifty sites had any audio content of any kind and, amazingly, only three sites had any full interview transcripts. In other words, the vast majority of oral history website creators were not seeking to provide access to their holdings – only 33 sites had any kind of online searchable catalogue or interview listing – but were using the web as a showcase or information board for their work. This reflects research in the US by Mary Larson and Karen Brewster which came to similar conclusions.³⁶

When it came to legal and ethical considerations, the survey's findings were worrying. Only 38 of the 265 sites mentioned copyright at all, despite decades of awareness-raising by the Oral History Society and others, and only nine of these gave a detailed explanation of copyright procedures. Only four sites with oral history content had addressed ethical issues through contextualising information, site-user agreements and/or passworded access, and might be regarded as models of best-practice.³⁷ The study concluded by calling for improved awareness of copyright and ethical issues amongst web creators whilst noting that the worst transgressors of best practice appeared to be community oral history groups, perhaps through ignorance, perhaps because copyright and consent wasn't considered to be an issue where the interviewees themselves created the site!

The survey came to some other interesting conclusions: that there was an apparent shortage of digital technical expertise amongst heritage professionals, and a concomitant deficiency in training provision in areas such as audio digitisation and editing, and web authoring. We might add to this more practical problems such as lack of finance, shortage of server space and a frequent lack of understanding amongst IT staff about the particular requirements for online audio delivery ('you need how much memory?!'), which has often forced oral history online projects down the priority list. All this might help to explain that, whilst 265 oral history websites in the UK sounds a large number, very few indeed actually provide an online resource involving access to archived oral histories. And some sites, knowing the popularity of oral history amongst web visitors and its potential for profile-raising, appear content to headline oral history as a point of interest, rather than attempting to provide online access. This leads me to a reflection on our own oral history web projects at the British Library.

The Way We Speak project³⁸

For some years the British Library Sound Archive has provided online access to catalogue data about its oral history holdings, now totalling over 300 collections and some 55,000 recordings,³⁹ but only a handful of audio extracts have been accessible online.⁴⁰ In 2003 a £3.25m government grant was awarded to the BL to digitise and make accessible images and sounds, from manuscripts to maps, music to wildlife recordings, all selected on the basis that they relate to ideas of 'place'.

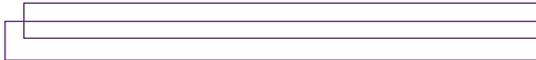
³⁶ Mary A Larson, 'Potential, potential, potential: The marriage of oral history and the World Wide Web', *The Journal of American History*, September 2001, pp.596-603; Brewster *ibid.*; see also Katy Barber, 'Oral history and the World Wide Web', seminar at the Oral History Association annual meeting, Portland, Oregon, 27 September 2004, at www.ccrh.org/barber/oah/benefits.htm

³⁷ These included www.museumoflondon.org.uk/MOLsite/londonvoices/ which was established as an online resource.

³⁸ For a more detailed description of this project see Rob Perks and Jonnie Robinson, "'The Way We Speak': Web-based representations of changing communities in England', *Oral History*, vol.33, no.2 (Autumn 2005), pp.79-90.

³⁹ www.cadensa.bl.uk

⁴⁰ <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/bldept/soundarch/about/soundarchive.html>



In March 2005 a new web-based resource was launched aimed at bringing the BL's collections into the homes and schools of a broader set of public users than it usually reaches. Included amongst 90,000 images and sounds on the site were 681 oral history extracts (fifty-five hours in total), entitled *The Way We Speak*, reflecting how English accents and dialects (sounds, words and structures) have changed since the Second World War, and how notions and understandings of place and community have shifted during that period.⁴¹ Two comparative audio collections, recorded fifty years apart and held by the British Library Sound Archive were selected for the project: the Survey of English Dialects and the Millennium Memory Bank.

The Survey of English Dialects (SED) is still one of the only systematic surveys to have been carried out into the dialects of England. Between 1950 and 1961 a team at Leeds University made audio recordings in 304 locations in England,⁴² almost all rural communities where it was felt that traditional dialect had been best preserved. The recordings varied in length from ten to thirty minutes, covering a myriad of topics but often connected with the speaker's occupation, for example ploughing, harvesting, hedging, pig-killing or breadmaking.⁴³ The second archival collection chosen was the Millennium Memory Bank (MMB), a joint project between BBC Local Radio and the British Library Sound Archive to create an archival 'snapshot' of 'ordinary' Britons' opinion and experience at the turn of the century. During 1998 and 1999 forty BBC local radio stations across the UK gathered 5429 oral history interviews on minidisc, now catalogued and archived at the BL.⁴⁴ MMB is one of the largest single oral history collections in Europe, and a unique study of Britain at one particular moment in its history.⁴⁵

For the web project the SED recordings were used as a baseline and cross-matched to equivalent extracts from MMB interviews, and in addition a further 126 MMB audio extracts from key urban centres were added to bring the survey up-to-date and establish a new baseline for future work. After an initial audit to select the most suitable MMB recording, a great deal of attention was given to selecting an appropriate passage for digitisation from both collections. The crucial factor here was combining the occasionally competing aspects of historical content – an intrinsically interesting, coherent passage that made sense in isolation – and medium – an extract that contained linguistic features that enabled a listener to identify a particular speaker with a particular locality. In creating a web-based resource about ways of speaking, every effort was made to select an excerpt containing an interesting word, a revealing pronunciation pattern or a noteworthy grammatical construction.

Alongside the audio extracts, and in the absence of transcripts, new catalogue records were created to provide content descriptive information but also comparative data about lexis, phonology and grammar – the words, sounds and structure that define the speech of a given community. The aim was to provide online users with some context and detailed guidance

⁴¹ The original CollectBritain website was migrated to the main BL website in late 2008. Content from *The Way We Speak* was moved to <http://sounds.bl.uk/>.

⁴² Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the Channel Islands were excluded with the single exception of six sites in Monmouthshire (Wales). 313 sites were selected but no audio recordings were made for three sites in Yorkshire and five sites in Lancashire. Collection reference C908.

⁴³ Harold Orton, *Survey of English Dialects: An Introduction*, Leeds: E J Arnold and Son Ltd., 1962, p.19.

⁴⁴ Collection reference C900 at www.cadensa.bl.uk. For more details see Rob Perks, 'The Century Speaks: A public history partnership', *Oral History*, vol.29, no.2 (Autumn 2001), pp.95-106.

⁴⁵ In addition to the archive the interviews formed the basis for 640 half-hour radio documentaries broadcast through the BBC's local radio network during the final sixteen weeks of the last millennium. Collection reference C953.

concerning the specific linguistic features that identify a speaker with a particular part of the country. The website was searchable by place-name and subject, and a map interface simplified the user's entry point.⁴⁶ Most of the original SED recordings are significantly shorter than the MMB recordings but for each collection five to ten minute audio extracts of intrinsic social history interest were selected, topped and tailed via SoundForge digital editing software, then stored as both .wav files and converted to streamed Windows Media for web access. Audio streaming, rather than downloadable, software was chosen to prevent bulk theft and unauthorised reversioning of the audio extracts.

Ethical issues (I)

Mounting such large quantities of oral history recordings and personal data on the web for the first time naturally raised a number of ethical issues. We felt safe in assuming that the SED informants were no longer alive (virtually all were born before 1900, some in the 1870s) but copyright and clearance forms were not used in the 1950s and formal participant consent was not sought in writing, let alone for the kind of world-wide access to the recordings anticipated. Whilst in this case we judged we were acting legally, we debated whether we were acting ethically and whether consent from living relatives of SED contributors should be sought. After discussion with Leeds University (as the originator of the recordings) we took the view that, firstly, it would be difficult, in many cases impossible, to contact relatives; and secondly that all the participants had apparently been made aware of the various public outcomes that the SED team had envisaged, and had given their verbal consent to participate on that basis. Indeed a great deal of the material had already been published in book form.⁴⁷ We were also using extracts, not complete recordings. To date we have not received any complaints or requests to remove any SED material from the site and in at least three cases we have been able to 'reunite' grandchildren with recordings of their late grandparents through the website and the publicity it has generated.⁴⁸

In the case of the MMB recordings the legal position was clearer as a comprehensive BBC clearance and copyright form had been used which assigned all interviewee rights for use in 'all media now known or which may be developed in the future'; sought agreement that the recording could be edited, adapted or translated; and (more controversially) waived all moral rights. Yet, as with all such forms, a lingering ethical question remained about how far interviewees had fully understood the implications of web access to their interviews and were thus said to have given 'informed consent'. In this case we were persuaded by arguments that they had all knowingly participated in a broadcast-based project, must therefore have understood the probability of their appearance on local and national radio, and that no further clearance was necessary. In terms of a website user agreement we decided that a simple copyright and user statement was sufficient, backed up with an extensive contextualising introductory essay with links to related sites and suggested reading, together with a glossary of terminology.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ This feature was sadly not migrated with the rest of the content in 2008 (but see discussion below about *Sounds Familiar*: <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/index.html>)

⁴⁷ For example see H Orton, W J Halliday & M V Barry (eds), *Survey of English Dialects: The Basic Material, Vols. 1-4*, Leeds: E J Arnold & Son Ltd, 1962-1971); H Orton, S Sanderson & J D A Widdowson, *The Linguistic Atlas of England*, London: Croom Helm, 1974.

⁴⁸ Andy Bloxham, "Dialects project reunites woman with her grandfather", *The Westmorland Gazette*, 5 March 2004.

⁴⁹ 'All recordings copyright © British Library Board. The recordings on this site are for private listening only. Copying, broadcasting or reproduction is prohibited.' More recently we have also added a background section on the 'Ethical use of oral history' and a 'Notice and Takedown Policy'.

User impact

The project did a great deal to reconnect the BL Sound Archive with a growing popular web-based interest in local history, accents and dialects. From the online launch of the first set of extracts featuring recordings from the north of England in February 2004, the level of international, national, regional, local press, radio and television coverage was extensive.⁵⁰ When web hits are added (41,000 in the launch month) this represented an initial reach of many millions, and a notable aspect of the coverage and user interest was its diversity. New audiences – actors, teachers, local historians, casual web-browsers, school students - were reached, and the BL's existing service to users enhanced. People 'visited' the BL online who had never been there before. And usage remained high: putting the launch period aside, more typical monthly hits on the CollectBritain site are averaged 20,000, of which between 3000 and 4500 are accent and dialect-related, far outstripping the number of onsite users for similar collections. There is a lot we still don't know about these new users – how they find the site, how long they spend, what their interests are, how they make use of the content - but measured in numbers alone it was a successful project.

Archival Sound Recordings (ASR) Project

By contrast to *The Way We Speak*, our second digitisation and web-access project set out not to present audio extracts as an interpreted resource, but to allow unmediated online archive access to whole interviews. With a government grant of £2.3m over six years (2004-9) 10,000 hours of BL Sound Archive recordings have been digitised for web access, including 3,400 hours of oral history interviews with artists, sculptors, photographers, architects, scientists and Jewish Holocaust survivors recorded over the past twenty years.⁵¹ 650 hours of interviews with jazz musicians were also included, plus 800 hours of other spoken word material.⁵² The original analogue cassette recordings have been digitised to .wav format (24 bit 48kHz) in up to thirty-minute segments, stored initially on DVD-Rs and more recently on hard-drives (using the Quadriga audio-archiving workstation⁵³) and versioned to both MP3 and Windows Media for access purposes. The new audio files were renamed and matched to metadata using METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard) based on extracting existing catalogue data in MARC format converted into Dublin Core in XML mark-up. METS also allows for preservation and structural metadata to be added in order to describe the complete digital object including audio, images, transcripts and other related materials.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ It has included all the broadsheet newspapers, a full page in the *Daily Mirror* (1.9m readers), Channel Four News, CBBC Exchange, BBC Radios 2, 4 and 5 Live, ITV This Morning, 19 local radio stations and 20 regional newspapers.

⁵¹ Funding has come from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) via the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). Full project details at <http://sounds.bl.uk/TextPage.aspx?page=projectinfo>, also Peter Findlay, "A Sound Education", *Viewfinder*, no.67 (June 2007), Media Online Focus section, pp.i-ii.

⁵² From the Bow Dialogues (C812) and the Oral History of Recorded Sound (C90).

⁵³ <http://www.cube-tec.com/quadriga/>

⁵⁴ For enthusiasts of metadata discussion, Guy Marechal of Memnon Audio Archiving Services (Brussels), the ASR Project's chosen digitisation contractor in its initial phase, based his presentation at the IASA Conference in Barcelona in September 2005 on the ASR project: 'New technologies and models of dissemination'. ASR phase 2 brought digitisation in-house, utilising the Quadriga system. All the project metadata will be compliant with Protocol for Metadata Harvesting from the Open Archives Initiative (<http://www.openarchives.org/>).

With this second project full web access is limited to educational internet users via so-called 'Shibboleth authentication'.⁵⁵ Only those remote users with an 'ac.uk' email whose institution or employer has a licence with the British Library have access to the complete unedited sound recordings (a potential estimated student audience alone of 4.7 million⁵⁶). Again we chose streamed Windows Media to deliver the sound and registered users can download an unlimited number of recordings for later use. Transcripts, where they exist, are available in searchable .pdf format but there is currently no direct electronic link between the audio and text versions (largely due to lack of resources), though both are available simultaneously. There are also detailed content summaries for every item and, unlike the summaries on the current BL Sound Archive online catalogue, they are searchable via Google and other web search engines, giving the interviews a much higher web presence. These summaries are available to all web users, regardless of authentication.

Ethical issues (2)

Despite the limitations on online access, ethical issues have remained paramount. All closed and restricted interviews were excluded from the project at the outset and have not been digitised (which is a cause for concern from a conservation point of view in the long term). For the rest we reapproached every interviewee and, in the case of deceased interviewees without a clearance form, relatives. There were three categories of interviewee, each requiring a different personalised letter accompanied by a question and answer sheet about the project:

1. In cases where we had a clearance form mentioning internet access and assigning copyright to the BL, we wrote to the last known address informing the interviewee of our intentions and asking them to contact us with any objections.
2. Where clearance forms were missing we wrote asking for permission to include the interview in the project through completion of the missing form. We excluded from the project any that failed to reply and/or grant permission.
3. With the third category of interviewees, for whom we held 'pre-internet' clearance forms (those that had not mentioned the internet or any kind of worldwide remote access), we wrote explicitly drawing the new kind of access and use to their attention and inviting them to contact us with any questions or objections.

As we had expected, the response from interviewees was muted, but it was nonetheless a very useful exercise. Some contacted us asking for copies of their recordings; some requested we bring the recording up to date; and relatives wrote with news of the death of interviewees, enabling us to update catalogue records. Many were simply delighted that there was interest in their interviews, that we were keeping them in the picture, and emailed their support ('it is all quite amazing!'). Only a handful objected to their interview going online. One photographer, also a teacher in higher education, wrote that 'increased access makes me feel very uncomfortable...my interview drew out a very strong emotional response'.

⁵⁵ Initially the interface is only available to the academic communities of the UK and conforms to British Library web usability guidelines, ensuring that users with physical disabilities can gain access to, and make full use of, the content. The implementation of Special Educational Needs Disability Access legislation is key to the notion of access for all, as is egif compliance. The interface is accessible by password on JANET, the UK's education and research network.

⁵⁶ Comprising 2,175,115 higher education students (Office of National Statistics, 2002/03), plus a further 2,602,600 further education students (Office of National Statistics, 2001/02).



Another commented that ‘there is far too much personal stuff in there about my children and named individuals’. The most reflective reply came from an artist who wrote: ‘I was told it was for a select and specialized audience and that was the way I gave the interview. Digitized is entirely different – I lose my privacy to anyone in the world to become a voyeur – I can’t possibly accept that...I’m afraid I see the hand of globalization – which is being pushed without reflection onto a wide group now searching the internet for a quick fix – rehashed as scholarship. I am against this. It is reckless.’

Such views were very much a minority but they helpfully reminded us to be vigilant of our own practice. It is an inescapable fact that the digitisation and web delivery agenda is at the forefront of thinking in most major archives and libraries: in fact most funding for digitisation of sound archive materials is well-spent for preservation reasons alone, but we should be under no illusions that it is the access implications of digitisation that is the key driver. Whether the web itself will continue to be as open, free and democratic as it is today indefinitely remains to be seen. Some concerns have recently been aired in the US about security service ‘fishing expeditions’ involving online searching of oral history archives in a quest for personal data.⁵⁷ Such breaches of trust and original intention, if proven, are likely to make interviewees more nervous and circumspect about divulging sensitive or confidential information, even on a closed basis. Quite apart from undermining the entire research process, this might also lead to an understandable reluctance by interviewees to allow web access to their recordings. More hard information about alleged ‘abuses’ of online access is required before any of these fears can be confirmed, but in the meantime a lively debate about the secondary use of oral history and personal interview data has been developing in the social science community.⁵⁸

Since the ASR site went live in 2006 more content has gradually been added, more user licences have been signed and the entire new service is available to users onsite at the BL in London.⁵⁹ User numbers are growing and stood at 1.7 million unique visitors at the end of 2008. Most actively debated internally has been whether or not a click-through site-user agreement is required for the site, in line with best-practice emerging in the US. In our own case BL web services staff felt it would discourage users and would anyway have limited impact. Instead a page of contextualising information has been added, including a section of the ‘Ethical use of oral history’, a suite of links to BL web policy on privacy, copyright and licensing, and a ‘Notice and Takedown’ procedure for handling requests to remove recordings (which has only been evoked once). Most importantly the ASR initiative has moved from the status of a discrete time-limited project to the main portal for all online web access to BL Sound Archive recordings, subsuming other sites such as CollectBritain. The implication of this is that the

⁵⁷ There was a lively session on this topic at the Oral History Association meeting in Pittsburgh in October 2008. See also Mike Featherstone, ‘Archiving cultures’, *British Journal of Sociology*, vol.51, no. 1 (January/March 2000), pp.161-184.

⁵⁸ Joanna Bornat, “A second take: revisiting interviews with a different purpose”, *Oral History*, vol.31 no. 1 (Spring 2003), p.50. See also N Mauthner, O Parry and K Milburn, “The data are out there, or are they? Implications for archiving qualitative data”, *Sociology*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1998), pp. 733-745; O Parry and N Mauthner, “Whose data are they anyway? Practical, legal and ethical issues in archiving qualitative data”, *Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2004), pp. 139-152; L Bishop, “Protecting respondents and enabling data sharing: reply to Parry and Mauthner”, *Sociology*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2005), pp. 333-336; O Parry and N Mauthner, “Back to basics: who re-uses qualitative data and why?”, *Sociology*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2005), pp. 337-342; Niamh Moore, “(Re)using qualitative data?”, *Sociological Research Online*, vol.12 no.3 (May 2007) at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/3/1.html> is a good summary.

⁵⁹ Philip Butler, Rachel Cowgill, Celia Duffy, Richard J Hand and Deborah Price, “Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives on the British Library’s Archival Sound Recordings project”, *Performance Research*, vol.11 no.4 (2007), Special Issue: Digital Resources, pp.117-126

original concentration on web access for the educational community will be broadened to full unrestricted access, assuming of course that these rights can be negotiated, which for some ASR content is far from straightforward.

Conclusion

We can no longer expect users to come to us: we must go to them. If we don't embrace web access to oral history we will be marginalising ourselves from funding and from a vital presence amongst the next generation. A survey of oral history web presence in the UK suggests we must better understand the web ourselves (through skills-acquisition and improved training), and it is clear we need to explore better ways of explaining online access to our interviewees as part of an assessment of the impact of the web on interview relationships, though generationally this will be arguably a diminishing concern (at least in the developed world). Our own experience at the British Library encourages us to recognise that the web can offer a myriad of modes of engagement, from showcasing to full access, all of which we can fruitfully explore, and that we should not be too precious about how users come at the material as long as user agreements and contextualising data are in place. We must also begin to reflect on the opportunities that digitisation and web access provide for creating new linkages and fresh ways of thinking.⁶⁰

The knowledge we gained through CollectBritain has led us to a more closely interpreted model of web production through two sites aimed primarily at schools, which have attracted very high numbers of online users.⁶¹ Food Stories drew on hundreds of interviews about Britain's food industry and culture to investigate how food relates to identity, cultural diversity, the environment, technology, farming, shopping and travel.⁶² Audio clips and transcripts are presented through a series of themes in animated settings, supported by historical context, 'go deeper' sections, glossaries and teachers' notes. Sounds Familiar, another learning web resource, built directly on the popularity and map-based functionality of the CollectBritain site to introduce students to UK accents and dialects.⁶³ Featuring 76 longer audio recordings and over 600 short clips, the site includes interpreted learning packages about language change, plus in-depth case studies focussing on three varieties of contemporary spoken English: received pronunciation (RP), Geordie dialect, and 'ethnic English'. An important new 'Web 2.0' experimental feature - 'Your Voices' - encourages schools to record and contribute their own recordings to the BL's collections. Whilst this is still being assessed it is clear that, as the web itself becomes an interactive multi-media archive of people's lives created by themselves, we will need to renegotiate our roles as archivists and guardians, to think beyond our own governing principles of artefact, provenance and discrete collection.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Frisch op.cit.

⁶¹ The *Sounds Familiar* site had 165,000 hits in its launch month.

⁶² <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/foodstories/index.html>

⁶³ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/index.html>

⁶⁴ Rob Perks, "'Messiah with the microphone?': Oral historians, technology and sound archives", in Donald Ritchie (ed) *The Oxford Handbook to Oral History*, OUP, forthcoming 2009; J-P Wallot and N Fortier, 'Archival science and oral sources', in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, first edition, 1998; Ellen Swain, 'Oral History in the archives: Its documentary role in the twenty-first century', *American Archivist*, vol. 66, no. 1, 2003, pp.139-58; Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 79-84, 171-9 and 245-51; Rob Perks, 'Bringing new life to archives: oral history, sound archives and accessibility', *IASA Journal*, no.13 (July 1999), pp.21-26.

On the Trail of the Telegraphone

Christian Liebl, Centre for Linguistics and Audiovisual Documentation, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Fact and fiction have tended to intermingle in accounts of “the oldest surviving magnetic recording in the world” (Daniel, Mee & Clark 1999: 20), which is today chiefly remembered for featuring the voice of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. We owe this sound document – which also happens to be the oldest of the three extant recordings of His Majesty’s voice (and can be listened to online at www.akustische-chronik.at) – to the so-called Telegraphone. Invented by the Danish engineer Valdemar Poulsen (1869-1942) in 1898, it was to become the forerunner of modern answering machines and tape recorders.

As is well known, the cylinder model of the Telegraphone was first presented to the general public on the occasion of the Paris Exhibition of 1900, where it won a Grand Prix and was described as one of the most spectacular items on show at the Palais de l’Electricité. Consequently, the date of the recording is invariably cited as 1900 in the literature, with some sources (both printed and online) erroneously insisting that it was also Paris where Franz Joseph’s words were immortalised on wire. More serious scholarship, however, has long realised that the recording took place somewhere in Vienna, while the Emperor visited a presentation of objects acquired by Austria at the Paris Exhibition. As much, indeed, can be gleaned from listening to the words added by the second speaker on the recording, Dr Wilhelm Exner, the general commissioner in charge of the Austrian displays in Paris. Still, although even in the latest excellent book on magnetic recording, the question of its exact venue is said to be as yet unsolved (Engel, Kuper & Bell 2008: 18), an unusually precise date – apparently based on Bruch (1983: 13) – is given instead: 20th September 1900. Earlier this year, Friedrich Engel solicited help from Dietrich Schüller in this matter, who has put the author on the case. Thanks to research in libraries and the Austrian State Archives, it is now possible to shed more light on the circumstances of this recording and summarise as follows.

While still in Paris, Wilhelm Exner, also long-time director of Vienna’s Technologisches Gewerbemuseum (‘Technological Trade Museum’), was thrilled by Poulsen’s invention and – on behalf of the ministry of trade – purchased one of his cylinder Telegraphones; this eventually ended up in the above-mentioned museum, where it can still be seen today. After the end of the Paris Exhibition on 12 November 1900, the idea was born to show this and other acquisitions to the (Viennese) public at large. Yet it was to take almost a year before this plan came to fruition. The venue that was finally chosen for this four-week exhibition was Gustav Pisko’s art gallery, located at Parkring 2 (part of the fashionable boulevard surrounding Vienna’s first district) and still known today for hosting the first public display of works by Egon Schiele’s “Neukunstgruppe” (‘New Art Group’). On 12 October 1901, one day prior to the general opening, a private viewing was arranged for the Emperor at 1 pm. Accompanied by the minister of trade and Wilhelm Exner, His Majesty was shown around the premises, at last arriving in the room devoted to the acquisitions from the realm of technology. It was there that he met Valdemar Poulsen himself, who had specially come from Copenhagen to demonstrate his invention to the Emperor, assisted by two representatives from Siemens & Halske, the company which had meanwhile “purchased the rights to produce Telegraphones in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia”; it may well be that Poulsen thus

“sought to emulate Alexander Graham Bell, who had induced the emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro, to use his newly invented telephone” (Daniel, Mee & Clark 1999: 20ff.). After Poulsen recorded his own voice and replayed it to the Emperor, Franz Joseph himself condescended to say a sentence at Poulsen’s request: “Diese neue Erfindung hat mich sehr interessiert, und ich danke sehr für die Vorführung derselben” (‘This new invention has interested me very much, and I am very grateful for the demonstration of the same.’). The Emperor then wished to listen to the recording to make sure that both the wording and the timbre of his voice were rendered correctly. We are left in the dark as to whether he was amused or not ...

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Daniel, Eric D., Mee, C. Denis & Mark H. Clark (eds.). 1999. *Magnetic Recording: The First 100 Years.* New York: The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Engel, Friedrich, Kuper, Gerhard & Frank Bell. 2008. *Zeitschichten: Magnetbandtechnik als Kulturträger – Erfinder-Biographien und Erfindungen.* (Weltwunder der Kinematographie, 9). Potsdam: Polzer.

Play the Un-playable: Tinfoil Recording Recovered by the Sound Archive Project

Nigel Bewley, *British Library Sound Archive*

Since December 2003, the British Library Sound Archive has been a partner in the Surface Scanning of Archived Sound Recordings research project at the University of Southampton. The project's manager is Professor John McBride.

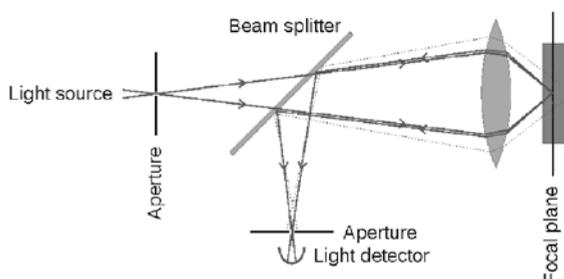
The aim of the project is to investigate methods for the non-contact scanning of mechanical (i.e. grooved) sound recordings so that the recorded sound can be preserved as a digital format with the ability to reproduce the recording. Because the scanning process uses a non-contact methodology rather than a traditional stylus-in-a-groove approach sound recordings on artefacts that are too fragile, unstable or otherwise unplayable by conventional means can be recovered. To date, the project has focused on the very earliest recordings (wax cylinders and coarsegroove discs) and has concentrated on three areas of research:

- **Non-Contact Surface Measurement.** The development of metrology systems for mapping the surface topology of cylinders and flat discs.
- **Sensor Development.** The design of optical sensors with improved angular tolerance and sensing speed.
- **Audio Signal Recovery.** Methods of accurate sound reproduction from discrete surface maps of cylinders and discs.

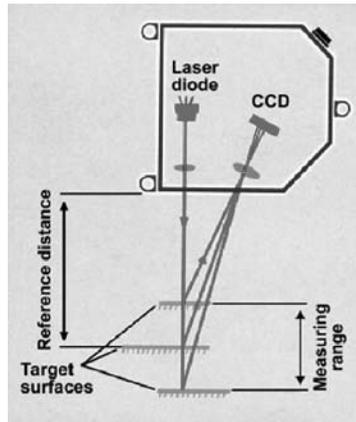
In the initial stages of the project, three non-contact sensing technologies were considered and a benchmarking study of the three competing systems was carried out to determine the best sensor technology for the project. The three systems considered were: a confocal laser, laser triangulation and a white light sensor.

With confocal laser scanning, the laser beam is oscillated through a collimator lens to vary its focal point to produce an in-focus image of the target (the groove). Laser triangulation detects the deflection of reflected light and so the position of the target. With a white light sensor the light beam is broken down into constituent red, green and blue which are focussed at different parts of the target.

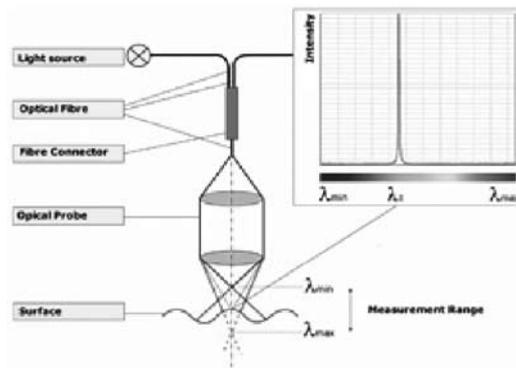
It was found that the white light sensor was most suitable for this scanning application.



Confocal laser

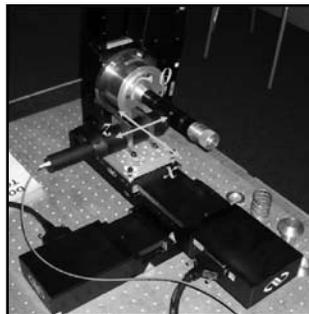


Laser triangulation



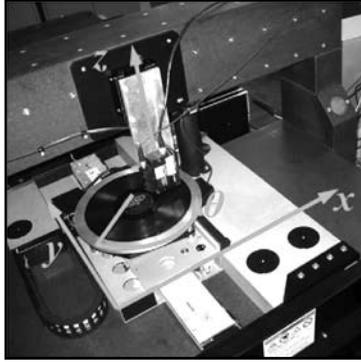
White light sensor

The project is able to scan cylinder recordings, in which case the sensor traverses along the cylinder's axis to produce a linescan. The cylinder is mounted on a rotary stage providing rotation of the cylinder after every completed linescan in preparation for the next.



Scanning a cylinder

The flat disc scanning system uses an air-bearing system. The sensor system is mounted on an overhead gantry pointing downwards onto the disc.



Scanning a disc

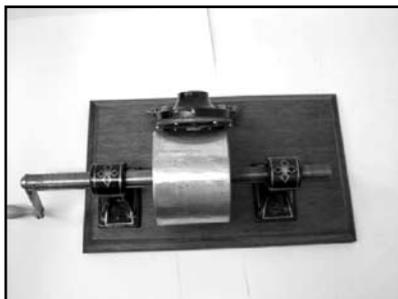
The scanning of the surface of a mechanical recording measures the groove, the recording itself, allowing a 'virtual stylus' to replay the sound.

The project was the winner in 2008 of the inaugural James A. Lindner Prize. This annual prize is awarded jointly by the South East Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archives Association (SEAPAVAA), The Association for Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), and the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA).

A discussion of the project can be found as a podcast at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/whatson/downloads/files/surfacescanning.mp3>, and more information about the project, including audio examples and moving images of scanning can be found at <http://www.archivesound.co.uk>.

Case Study: The Tinfoil Recording

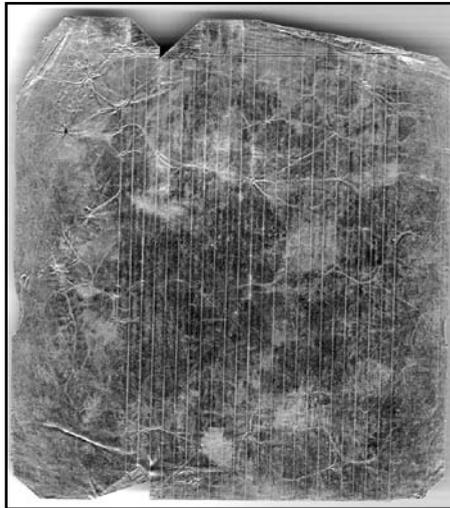
The British Library Sound Archive lent to the project their earliest artefact containing recorded sound, an Edison tinfoil phonograph. Thomas Alva Edison invented this process in 1877 and it is the first true recording machine in that it allows for sound to be recorded as well as be played back. The carrier of the recording was a piece of tinfoil wrapped round a cylindrical drum. The sound waves at the mouthpiece vibrated a diaphragm and created undulations in the tinfoil. As the cylinder rotated – turned by hand – it was carried slowly from right to left under the mouthpiece by a screw mechanism, leaving consecutive lines of undulations in the tinfoil.



Edison Tinfoil Phonograph

Two things made intelligibility of the recording difficult. First, there was no amplification, either while the recording was taking place or during its reproduction. A speaker would rely on sheer lung power alone, addressing the mouthpiece at a distance of about 2 centimetres at the top of their voice. Second, there was considerable background noise imposed by the tinfoil.

Not many genuine tinfoil recordings have survived.



British Library's Tinfoil Recording

The British Library's Tinfoil Recording has an accompanying letter from EMG Hand-made Gramophones Ltd. addressed to a Mrs Morris Davis and dated 16 April 1937. She had asked EMG to transfer the recording. EMG couldn't because, "we have no method whatever of playing (the recording) and we doubt very much whether any such method is in existence". Quite how the recording arrived at the British Library is not known. The letter's envelope also bears the name 'Harriet Martineau'. This always was the cause of some speculation as to whether the recording was of Harriet Martineau but this idea was always impossibility. Harriett Martineau was an English writer and philosopher, renowned in her day as a journalist, political economist, slavery abolitionist and feminist. She died in 1876, crucially the year before Edison invented the technology. It cannot be her.

Professor John McBride and his team at Southampton scanned the tinfoil recording and recovered the sound. On the transfer of the tinfoil we can just about make out a woman's voice but no words are discernable. It can be heard at the end of the above-mentioned podcast. Although the audio is, by modern standards, of poor quality, it's extraordinary that the 130-year-old recording survives and is recoverable at all.

Friedrich Engel, Gerhard Kuper, Frank Bell
Zeitschichten: Magnetbandtechnik als Kulturträger. Erfinder-Biographien und Erfindungen.

Polzer Media Group GmbH Potsdam 2008, ISBN -10: 3-934535-27-5, ISBN 13: 978-934535-27-5

632 pages, illustrated. €130

There is not a misprint in the title: it is not (hi)stories (German: Zeitgeschichten) but time layers (German: Zeitschichten); the book makes use of the term 'time' meaning chronology but not history as a cultural-philosophical analysis.

The authors: Friedrich Engel worked for the BASF Corporation for many years. Fascinated by the magnetic tape technology and its history he has written many articles on magnetic tape and its application in a variety of publications. The focus of his contribution is the historical development of magnetic storage technology and magnetic tape in particular. Gerhard Kuper was head of the basic development division at AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft) in Wedel near Hamburg where the so-called AEG magnetophones (tape recorders) were produced for a long time. His contribution concentrates on the technical problem solutions of the recording and replay equipment. Frank Bell, collector of sound studio and movie devices, is author of TV documentations. His contribution describes the introduction of magnetic tape in radio and TV at the NWDR broadcasting corporation (Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk).

It is obvious that Friedrich Engel and Gerhard Kuper especially supplement each other ideally in their respective areas of knowledge. With BASF and AEG as background companies where magnetic tape recording started economically, it is understandable that both authors restrict themselves to the development in Germany - without losing sight of the international competitors.

The book is divided into nine chapters plus an introduction and a comprehensive credits chapter with explanations in tabular form, photo credits, register and a list of footnotes.

The first chapter "Vordenker und Pioniere" (Forerunners and factual pioneers) deals with the more than 50 years between 1878 and 1932 where we meet inventors and discoverers such as Oberlin Smith, Valdemar Poulsen, Curt Stille and Fritz Pfeumer; all of them engaged in magnetism and its possible applications but not yet able to formulate a conclusive scientific explanation of the phenomena of magnetism.

The collaboration of the two large-scale enterprises AEG (for the electro-mechanical part) and BASF (for the chemical part) in order to gain acceptance and market the findings they had obtained so far, leads over to chapter two "Die Ausformung der Magnetontechnik" (The shaping of the magnetic tape technology) about 1933 – 1945. This chapter describes the cumbersome way in which the technical difficulties had to be subdued (e.g. homogeneous tape against coated tape, or one-motor-drive against three-motor-drive principle) until the method of magnetic tape recording had been completely developed to a marketable product. The final break-through against the superior record succeeded from one moment to the next with the discovery of the high-frequency bias. At AEG, it was most of all Eduard Schueller

who, unlike any other person, full of imagination and unerringly pushed the development of the magnetic tape recording, whilst at BASF the components of the magnetic tape such as the base film, the magnetic particles and the binder were continuously improved.

The period from the end of WWII until 1960 is covered by the comprehensive third chapter “Die Jahrzehnte der Reife” (The decades of maturity). It begins with the transfer of the magnetophone as one of the spoils of war to the UK and especially the USA, where it was recognized as a high-grade sound recording system. First of all in the USA a rapid continuation of the improvement of the magnetic tape recorder took place; this was possible due to the international decontrol of the German patents and meant an immense advantage for US companies, affecting AEG and BASF adversely. As a consequence, AEG and BASF were increasingly confronted with an international competition in Europe and also from overseas. From about 1950 onward magnetic tape recording won through, at first in the USA, then worldwide and most of all in Europe, not only on the professional but also on the newly arising amateur market. As a supportive effect, a European standard for magnetic tapes was introduced in order to guarantee compatibility between tape and recorder, independent of the manufacturer.

The fourth chapter “Magnetton für Studio und Rundfunk” (Magnetic sound for recording studio and broadcasting) covers the professional sector between 1960 and 1990. The high requirements of the broadcasters with regard to tape speed, frequency response, dynamics, signal-to-noise ratio, print-through effect and such things compelled the manufacturers to continuously improve their products. However, considering the perfection already achieved, great strides were no longer possible. All AEG-Telefunken magnetophones of the post-war time, starting with the K8 type up to M21 type, are described. Also, competing machines up to the so-called ‘small tape decks’ such as the famous Maihak Reportofon are not omitted. At BASF, the PVC film base was replaced with the PE foil and for the first time back-coated tapes turned up. When AEG-Telefunken sold its magnetophone line to Studer, it became clear that the magnetic tape recording technology, at least in the analogue domain, exceeded its summit. Even the multi-track technology with up to 32 tracks was unable to change that tendency. The analogue magnetic tape was exhausted.

Not only broadcasting and record companies used magnetic sound as shown in the fifth chapter “Magnetton für Film und Fernsehen“ (Magnetic sound for film and television). Magnetic sound for film advanced just after WWII as far as Hollywood but did not succeed finally in the movie theaters against photographic sound despite clear advantages. In contrast, magnetic sound gained followers quickly within the TV-film area and was eventually internationally standardized in 1972 as Timecode-system.

A special sixth chapter “Musik von Kassetten” (Music from cassettes) is dedicated to the Compact Cassette and its introduction, triumphant advance and universal use. The Compact Cassette was so successful because there was, on the one hand, an attractive offer of pre-recorded cassettes and, on the other hand, broad support from the set-producing industry thanks to the clever licensing policy of Philips, flanked by suitable standards. Also the replacement of iron dioxide by chromium dioxide as magnetic particles took a positive effect on the CC's success.



The seventh chapter “Videoaufzeichnung” (Video recording) deals with the simultaneous recording of video and audio on magnetic tape. The race for the first fully functioning video recorder took place in the USA and was won by Ampex against strong competition of RCA and Bing Crosby Enterprises. The Ampex VR-1000 used rotating heads writing vertical tracks on a 2”-magnetic tape manufactured by 3M. The first 2” video recorder produced in Europe was launched ten years later by the German company Fernseh GmbH. From then things started happening: aside from the Telefunken TED videodisc (a pure outsider), machines using helical-scan tape processing with α - and Ω -wrapping in professional B- and C- formats were put on the market. Home systems such as VCR, U-matic, Betamax, VHS, Video 2000, Betacam SP, LVR, Video 8, Hi-8 and DV conquered the amateur market. In parallel, the magnetic tape was further developed from chromium dioxide through MP tape (metal particle, pure iron) towards ME tape (metal evaporated).

The eighth chapter “Technische Magnetbandspeicher” (Technical magnetic tape storage) is dedicated to the so-called instrumentation recorder used for the recording of measuring data, e.g. for air traffic control. Before that, magnetic storage devices for data recording such as the drum dump, the ferrite-core memory or disc-shaped stores (diskettes) were in use. Already in this phase there was a clear tendency towards the hard-disc superseding the magnetic tape storage.

The last chapter describes the magnetic tape entering the digital era. Due to the fact that its non-linear characteristic curve, which is extremely critical in the analogue domain, plays no part in the digital domain, things such as signal-to-noise ratio, modulation noise, print-through effect, sensitivity variations, frequency response, level control, crosstalk and the like are no longer measurable and, therefore, meaningless. And most of all: copying without any quality loss for almost as many generations as you like – this is possible in the digital domain only. The digital revolution is irresistible, no matter whether audio-, video- or any other signals have to be recorded.

The book is clearly written and understandable also for the layman; moreover, 3747 (!) foot notes give evidence that the book is, one should almost admirably certify: meticulously researched, complemented richly by 624 illustrations. A variety of tables for different facts, among them pertinent patents, offers additional useful information (e.g. a table important for archival work “Unrecorded tapes, standard recording tapes, equalization curves”), and a comprehensive index facilitates the location of relevant text. _

Conclusion: despite its proud price, this book is a must for everyone who is interested in or deals with magnetic recording and storage of sound and images.

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Editor: **Janet Topp Fargion**, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom. Fax +44 (0)20 7412 7427 - email janet.toppfargion@bl.uk

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- Editor:** **Janet Topp Fargion**, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom. Fax +44 (0)20 7412 7427 – email: janet.toppfargion@bl.uk
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