The Newspaper Collection at Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Board (Singapore)
Prepared by Gracie Siew Kheng Lee

Reading Room of the Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections. Exterior of the National Library
Photos courtesy of the National Library Board Singapore

The Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library contains a comprehensive collection of current and retrospective materials on and about Singapore acquired through legal deposit, acquisition, gifts and donations. One of the most popularly consulted resources is the newspaper archive. The collection comprises approximately 180 Singapore/Malayan newspapers dating back to 1827 with the Singapore Chronicle (1827-1930), Singapore’s first English newspaper. Vernacular presses from the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities are also represented.

Microfilming of the National Library’s collections began in the 1950s. It was initiated as a move to preserve and archive Singapore’s documentary heritage that was rapidly deteriorating under the tropical heat and humidity. Today, the microfilm collection stands at 24,000 microfilm reels and 12,500 fiche, with the newspaper collection forming a substantial portion. The newspaper collection has been further strengthened with titles acquired from libraries in countries where Singapore has strong historical links. These include the British Library and libraries in Malaysia. The National Library continues to film and archive all locally produced newspapers, ranging from broadsheets like The Straits Times (1845+), Lianhe Zaobao (1983+), Berita Harian (1957+) and Tamil Murasu (1936+), to commuter and youth papers like Today (2000+), My Paper (2006+), and Friday Weekly (1991+).

Access to the Newspaper Collection
The current month’s local and foreign newspapers are available for reference at the Central Lending Library located at Basement 1 of the National Library Building. Retrospective newspaper issues are archived on microfilm and are housed with the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library located at Level 11 of the same building. Microfilms of local newspapers are usually available within two months of its publication.

The microfilm collection is largely an open-access collection with small numbers of purchased microfilms and microfiches kept in closed access areas. Newspapers titles are identified through the library’s OPAC, as well as the onsite microfilm newspaper index and card catalogues. Publications like Patricia Lim’s Singapore, Malaysian and Brunet newspapers: An international union list, and press highlights like the Mirror of Opinion compiled by then Ministry of Culture, also serves as useful guides.

English Newspapers
One of the library’s most significant English newspaper titles is The Straits Times (1845+) the longest-surviving broadsheet in Singapore. The library’s holdings begin from its first issue published on 15 July 1845 to present. Previously lacking issues for the years 1871-1886 were completed with a generous donation of 348 bound volumes by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in 1909. Other major English-language press sources include the Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1835-1932); Singapore Free Press (1847-1942, 1946-1962); the Singapore Daily Times (1865-1882); the Malay Tribune (1914-1942, 1945-1951); the Sibuan Shimbaru (1942-1945), published during the Japanese Interregnum; the Singapore Standard (1950-9) amongst others. The collection also contains a host of short-lived papers such as the Eastern Daily Mail (1905-1908), the Times of Malaya (1938-1939), The Eastern Sun (1966-1971); the Singapore Monitor (182-
1985) and more recently, the Project Eyeball (2000-2001) and Streets (2000-2004).

The early English papers catered mainly to the small European community in Singapore. Reflecting Singapore's origins as a trading port, the news was largely commercial in orientation and common features included shipping news, commodity prices, commercial activities, advertisements and social news. It was only with the establishment of the Singapore Daily Times, the second English daily in Singapore, that the press began to engage more deeply into politics. By the early 20th century, non-Europeans had established a number of English papers. Of note was the Malaya Tribune which aimed "to express the views and aspirations of the domiciled communities". It was founded by Dr. Lim Boon Keng, a prominent figure in the Straits-Chinese community and a group of leading Chinese and Eurasians. The other noteworthy paper was the Singapore Standard (1950-1959) started by the Aw family of the Tiger Balm fame. The small but significant Eurasian community also established a number of short-lived papers such as the Straits Intelligence (1882-84) and the Straits Eurasian Advocate (March 1888-June 1888). In the 1970s, the deliberate political situation of post-independent Singapore saw the closure of a number of newspapers like the Eastern Sun (1966-1971) and the Singapore Herald (1970-1971). In recent times, the liberalization of the media scene in Singapore has led to the introduction of new papers like the experimental Project Eyeball, and commuter papers like Streets, Today (2000+), and My Paper (2006+).

Malay Newspapers

Mirroring the increased development of Singapore, the vernacular presses flourished during the 1870s when the Straits Settlements came under the direct rule of the Colonial Office in London in 1867. The library's holdings of Malay newspapers include the first Malay newspaper published in Singapore, the Jawi Perananak (1876-1895), a Malay weekly produced by the locally born Indian Muslims. The paper was credited with raising the social awareness of the Malay community and promoting Malay education and language. Other titles in the collection include Lembaga Melayu (1914-1931) and Warta Malaya (1933-1941). Lembaga Melayu was a forward-looking and moderate newspaper which enjoyed a following amongst the urban middle-class Malays. The paper was edited by Mohammad Yunus bin Abdullah who is widely acknowledged as the father of Malay journalism. Warta Malaya was an important vehicle for the discussion of Malay affairs. The paper was founded by the Alsagoff family and edited by Onn bin Jaafar who became one of the founders of UMNO, the largest political party in Malayaya. Also within the library's collection is one of the most complete run of the Utusan Melayu (1939-1940, 1945-1998) held in any Singapore library. The Utusan Melayu, revived in 1938 by Yusof bin Ishak, Singapore's first President, was the leading Malay newspaper in Malayaya after the war. The paper represented the intellectual heartbeat of Malay nationalism and the independence movements of Singapore and Malayaya during the 1940s and 1950s.

Chinese Newspapers

The library's collection also houses a rich selection of Chinese newspapers. It includes Le Bao (hokkien) (commonly known as Lat Pan), the earliest extant Chinese newspaper in Singapore. The library's holdings cover the period 1887-1932. Other leading Chinese newspapers also available are: Xing Bao [星报] (1890-1898); Tian Nan Xin Bao [天南新報] (1898-1905); Ri Xin Bao [日新報] (1899-1901); Zhong Hui Xin Bao [中新时报] (1908-1946); Zhong Xing Ri Bao [中兴日报] (1907-1957). These papers represented a variety of viewpoints and editorial stances concerning the events which were taking place in China. Earlier papers like Le Bao were generally conservative papers which supported the Manchu and British governments. Later papers positioned themselves as progressive publications which promoted reformation within the Chinese community, Chinese nationalism, Confucianism or pro-revolutionary ideas. The other two major Chinese newspapers in the library's collections are the Nan Yang Shang Bao [南洋商报] (1923-1941, 1946-1983) started in 1923 by Chinese industrialist and philanthropist Tan Kah Kee, and Xin Zhou Ri Bao [星洲日报] (1929-1941, 1945-1983) by "Tiger Balm King" Aw Boon Haw in 1929. The Nan Yang Shang Bao enjoyed a wide readership amongst the Chinese mercantile class because it provided reliable reporting on commodity and stock prices whilst the Xin Zhou Ri Bao was started to raise the literacy level of the Chinese.

Indian Newspapers

The library's microfilm collection also contains a small selection of newspapers by the Indian community. Singhel Nenaz (1887-1890) was published in 1887 by Makadoom Saiboo to commemorate the Queen Victoria Silver Jubilee celebrations. The Tamil Murasu (1936+), the longest running Tamil newspaper in Singapore was started by the Singapore Tamil Reform Association in 1935. Though many of the early Indian newspapers dealt with the news and concerns back home in India, they also provided an important avenue for creative and literary expressions, thereby fostering the birth and development of Singapore Indian literature.

References


REPORT ON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS PUBLISHED IN LORRAINE (FRANCE) FROM THE 18TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY. NANCY (FRANCE) 13-14 NOVEMBER 2006
Prepared by Else Delanay

A two days colloquium organized by MEDIAL, the Regional Centre for Training in Library and Information Sciences at the University Nancy 2, under the auspices of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and financed by the DRAC Lorraine (a delegation in cultural matters of the Ministry of Culture). The publishing of the volume Vosges in 2005 and the volume Meuse in 2006 of the Bibliography of French Local Political and General Information Newspapers (Bibliographie de la Presse française politique et d’information générale) right up to 1944 was the opportunity of the venue. The last two volumes concerning Lorraine (Moselle and Meurthe-et-Moselle) will be published in 2007-2008. Some 60 librarians, newspaper historians and archivists gathered at the Nancy County Library. Around 20 papers were presented dealing with the newspaper history in Lorraine whose history is particular due to the former German annexation of the region (1871-1918) and to the fact that Lorraine is a bordering region on Luxemburg and Germany. Newspaper bibliography, preservation work and digitization projects as well as the present situation of Lorraine’s newspaper industry and of the periodicals published by learned societies were largely approached and examined. Two small exhibitions on historical newspapers in Lorraine illustrated well some of the papers presented.

It was indeed a privileged moment of reflection and exchange, showing clearly the prime role of programmes such as the Bibliography of Local French Newspapers, regarding the development and the preservation of the regional heritage as well as the access to important sources for the research.

Front Page: celebrating 100 years of the British newspaper
Prepared by Edmund King, British Library

The British Library gratefully acknowledges the John Frost Newspaper Archive for permission to reproduce these front pages.
Front Page: celebrating 100 years of the British newspaper was produced as collaboration between the Newspaper Publishers Association (NPA) and the British Library to commemorate the centenary year since the founding of the NPA. At the heart of the exhibition was an interactive newsroom designed for donated Apple PCs and HP industrial printers where visitors could create a ‘front page’ for themselves and learn about the news business in the process. The exhibition was supported by a marketing campaign devised to attract new audiences to Library exhibitions, and to target those with a specific interest in the history of newspapers and journalism. The Library ran a subsidiary campaign in conjunction with the exhibition ‘Save the Front Page’ to raise awareness amongst visitors of the issues facing the BL’s newspaper collection.

The front pages selected showed the news in all its many varieties, for example by exploring themes such as exploration, war, politics, royalty.

A total of 111,445 visitors came to the exhibition, an average of 813 per day over a longer than usual duration for an exhibition – 137 days. Additionally, 1,844 people attended the 20 events the Library ran in conjunction with the exhibition, including gallery talks, workshops, lectures and panel discussions. A competition which involved Andrew Neil as chair of judges extended the reach of the exhibition to include designers and photographers as well as would-be journalists.

The exhibition was designed by Karl Abeyesekera. The front pages were lent by John Frost.

A free souvenir ‘newspaper’ guide to the exhibition was given to every visitor. Facsimile copies of vintage newspapers were also available for visitors to pick up and keep. Additionally, the British Library published a book by Dennis Griffiths: Fleet Street, 500 years of the press.

The press coverage of the Front Page exhibition was exceptional with commend pieces, news items, media commentary, reviews and reminiscences in the consumer, trade, national, regional, local and international media and a wide range of radio interviews, broadcast and new media coverage. The two week campaign run on BBC 2’s flagship current affairs programme, Newsnight to find the nation’s most memorable headline had an excellent response with over 5,000 votes. This generated further coverage with commentary on the winning headline, the Daily Telegraph’s Twin Towers front page.

The exhibition was opened by HM The Queen on 23 May 2006. The official opening by Her Majesty the Queen ensured that the regional and national press covered the exhibition and the story ran on the newswires. There was press interest throughout the exhibition with Bloomberg and Reuters running stories in the last month of the exhibition generating further interest.

The exhibition appealed to schools and attracted a larger than average number of school visits. The BL Learning team delivered 57 workshops: 11 primary schools, 40 secondary schools, 2 FE colleges and 4 other. A total of 1,214 students took part. The interactive newsroom was especially well-received by visiting groups.

The exhibition was a reminder to us all that printed newspapers still sell millions of copies a week in the UK, remaining a relevant and vibrant medium for capturing the moment, and providing informed editorial commentary upon all kinds of events.

With acknowledgements to Heather Norman-Soderling, Head of Public & Regional Marketing, British Library.

The British Library gratefully acknowledges the John Frost Newspaper Archive for permission to reproduce these front pages.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE 24th BUSINESS MEETING held at the University of Utah Guest House, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A. Tuesday, 16 May 2006

The meeting took place prior to the conference, Newspapers of the World Online: U.S. and International Perspectives, May 17-18, 2006, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A. The proceedings of this conference have been published by K. G. Saur as IFLA Publication 122, edited by Hartmut Walravens. They include the papers from the 25th meeting in Seoul Korea in August 2006.

The keynote address by Jim Wall, Publisher of the Deseret Morning News, Salt Lake City Utah, follows the business meeting report. As part of our online resources, the Newspapers Section members are working on an online resource of Internet Links to International newspapers. It will be based on the Library and Archives Canada website for international newspapers at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/8-161214-e.html (English) and http://www.collectionscanada.ca/8-161214-f.html (French) and members were asked to contribute sites to this resource.

A proposal for a Handbook for Newspapers Collection Management which was done in 2003 will be sent by Ed King to Par Nilsson so that we may forward this project by selected text translated into French, the Scandinavian languages and possibly some of the Eastern European languages. Ed King will also contact AUKML (the Association of U.K. Media Librarians) concerning preparation of a handbook.

The Newspapers Section is considering expansion of its name and outlook to become the IFLA News Media Section. The changes involved will be drafted into a letter and will be sent to the Chair of IFLA.


2006 International Newspaper Conference Newspapers of the World Online: U.S. and International Perspectives

Reported by Georgia Higley, Library of Congress

Keynote address by Jim Wall, Publisher, Deseret Morning News

Following brief remarks by representatives of the IFLA Newspaper Section, the first of two keynote speakers officially opened the conference. Jim Wall, Publisher, Deseret Morning News, began with a humorous reference to his profession's tendency to take things a bit out of context, taking the first eleven words of the IFLA Newspaper Section's scope: "The Section is concerned with all issues relating to newspapers." Wall focused his remarks on the challenges facing today's newspaper publisher.

For Wall, the newspaper business is based on three words--reliable, relevant, and reachable. Information must be where people want it. His newspaper is "bullish about print," buying a new facility with state of the art production capabilities, since it is still the print newspaper, the core product, that pays the bills. The pressure on newspapers today is the need to look at the newspaper audience differently. The Deseret Morning News (DMN) concentrates on local news, and is publishing zoned editions of the newspaper specific to the geographic regions of Salt Lake City. The newspaper publishes special interest publications for the city's Hispanic/Latino communities delivered in rack and stack venues, in locations with the highest concentration of Hispanics and Latinos. A future publication is one on entertainment. These and other speciality publications are not distributed through the newspaper's normal circulation practices, but instead hope to reach people in their areas of interest. The DMN will continue to build strategies using the print product.

From the core print newspaper, DMN repurposes information to attract readers who are not interested in a print product, but admits that there is still no satisfactory answer to the question, how can newspapers interact with the internet user? In the print edition, serendipity is a key element of the reader experience—jumps leading to wonderful discoveries—and is not something that can be easily duplicated on the internet. However, the internet user is looking for news in different ways and the challenge for the newspaper is to respond to these differences. At this point Walls showed the flash movie, EPIC: 2014, a vision of the future showing newspapers sideling by Google and the Evolving Personalized Information Construct.

How to change this future? The DMN is characteristic of how the newspaper industry is responding to the Internet. Newspapers repurpose the news into a digital presentation and provide a digital replica newspaper (that is noted by the Audit Bureau of Circulation). A better response is the browser friendly site, remaking the website with different editors and reporters for the web version of the newspaper, in which presentation and layout is important (such as linking related stories to simulate the jump feature of the print newspaper) in order to keep readers at the site. In addition, origination and aggregation of information is important for the web experience. The web will have content not available in the

1 For more about EPIC:2014, including a link to the flash movie and its sequel, see: http://www.povnter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=85631
print, and reporters will have additional space online for stories and video. The citizen journalist can participate in this experience. Creating dialogue is very important in this environment.

The notion of reliability and relevance is changing. Newspapers used to be known for their reliability and use of multiple sources; today surveys have shown that readers now believe something if it is seen, heard, or read from several sources (not just a newspaper). Roles for the online newspaper are to originate news and to aggregate news by collaborating with various information sources and giving options to readers that they can trust. The newspaper industry needs to stake out credibility, rather than exclusivity, as its niche in the online world.

Wall also touched on the challenges this online environment raises for archives and libraries since they too need to develop new tools and techniques to work in the online environment.

The PowerPoint presentation for the second keynote address given by StephenAbram, SIRSI/Dynix’s Vice President of Innovation is available at http://stephenslighthouse.sirsi.com/archives/2006/07/ifla_news_secti.html

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE 25th BUSINESS MEETINGS held at the COEX Convention Centre, Seoul, Korea on Sunday 19 August 2006 and Saturday 25 August 2006**

The IFLA Newspapers Open Sessions in Durban, South Africa in 2007 will focus on how technology can be used to widen access via online means in future to both modern and older newspapers published in Africa. Speakers will be invited from the African Press with the view toward a panel discussion.

The decline of the availability of microfilm readers was noted with some alarm and this matter will be brought to the attention of IFLA Headquarters given its impact on access to a large number of microform collections.

With much appreciated funding from ProQuest, one librarian, Maritza Failla, was funded to attend IFLA Newspapers Section meeting and conference in Utah and the Section is pursuing continued funding to allow people to attend our sessions. The complete meeting report is available at: http://www.ifla.org/VII/s39/brochure/39-minutes2006Aug.pdf

**THE CONFERENCE, RESOURCES, PROCESSING, PRESERVATION, DIGITIZATION, PROMOTION/INFORMATION held 19-21 October 2006 at the Poznan School of Social Sciences, Poznan, Poland.**

This conference was organized by the Poznan University Library, the Poznan School of Social Sciences, and the IFLA Newspapers Section. The papers were of a high quality. They demonstrated that a large amount of work is taking place within Poland in relation to the conservation of newspapers. Digitization of newspapers is also actively being looked at by a number of libraries. Thanks were given to colleagues at the Poznan University Library for their hospitality and their really good organization of the proceedings. The papers have been published as: (in Polish) *Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. GAZETY. Zasoby.*


_Promotion/Information: Conference Proceedings, Poznan October 19-21 2006._ 478p. ISBN 83-918728-6-6. and are available by contacting: Poznan University Library ul. Ratajczak 38/40 61-816 Poznan E-mail: library@amu.edu.pl Tel.: +48 61 829-3800 Fax +48 61 829-3824.
International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON) Report to IFLA Newspaper Section, February 2007

Submitted by Linda Ronan, ICON Project Coordinator and James Simon, Director of International Resources, Center for Research Libraries

ICON's current phase of preservation microfilming is all but complete. With the exception of three titles which are awaiting finishing touches by our filmer, all titles have been filmed, catalogued and distributed. This round resulted in the preservation of important runs of 11 titles, totaling 192 reels of microfilm and approximately 210,000 filmed pages:

1. Anadolu (Izmir, Turkey) 1950-54: – 7 reels
2. Dunya (Istanbul, Turkey) 1952-62: – 16 reels
3. Národní Listy (Prague, Czech Republic) 1918-31: – 43 reels
7. Új Magyarország (Budapest, Hungary) 1945-48/New Hungary (Budapest) 1946-47: – 2 reels
9. Vanguardia (Lima, Peru) 1943-63: At filmer – 6 reels
10. Universal (Caracas, Venezuela) 1922-1931, 1941-1943: Some at filmer – 59 reels

ICON has completed its enhancement phase. Improvements include a total update of data, additional searching capabilities, such as searching records by OCLC number and searching by institution. The new database also includes a more detailed subject field and improved holdings information. Record display now includes links to earlier and later titles, and electronic access links. The database currently contains records from the Center for Research Libraries, Library of Congress, New York State Library, University of Washington, Washington University of Illinois, and University of Connecticut. In addition, ICON has released a full set of records from the Cooperative Serials program (CONSER.)

Additional enhancements include administrative tools which will allow ICON’s partner institutions to add and edit their bibliographic, preservation, and holdings data locally.

The new administrative website allows ICON’s administrators to batch import MARC records, including bibliographic and holdings records. Non-MARC format can also be accommodated, and testing is currently underway for batch importing such records.

ICON is actively seeking new institutional partners to add bibliographic and/or holdings records to the database which will further increase its value to the world wide scholarly community. For more information, those interested may contact either Linda Ronan (lronan@crld.edu) or James Simon (simon@crld.edu)

ICON WEB SITE
The completely redesigned Web site (http://icon.crl.edu) has been live since mid 2006. It has expanded considerably from its previous incarnation and now provides the kind of comprehensive information originally envisioned by ICON’s founders. Along with access to the ICON databases the website is a clearinghouse for information related to newspaper preservation, resources and projects. Among the information contained on the site is a history of the ICON project, a summary of the titles preserved by ICON, technical specifications for the ICON database, links to digitization projects worldwide, links to libraries with foreign newspaper collections in the U.S. and international libraries with substantial foreign newspaper collections. ICON staff is currently finalizing its selection of key newspaper reference guides to digitize and make available on the website.

DISTRIBUTED CATALOGING
ICON Project Coordinator Linda Ronan and Cataloging Coordinator Steve Early have implemented a procedure to make and distribute CONSER-level records for uncataloged newspapers. The workflow allows our partner institutions to collate, record title information, preservation status, and holdings information, and transfer the data to CRL through collaborative software. A complete catalog record is created and redistributed back to the institution and is added to the ICON database. Since mid 2006, we have completed cataloging for nearly 120 previously uncataloged titles. We are currently working with two institutions, the University of Illinois and the University of Connecticut, and we are looking forward to the opportunity of working with new institutional partners.

NEWS FROM THE IFLA SECTION ON NEWSPAPERS

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 73RD IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL

"Libraries for the future: Progress, Development and Partnerships"
19-23 August 2007, Durban, South Africa

Call for Papers
Newspapers Section

African Newspapers: Access and Technology
IFLA's Newspaper Section invites you to submit a short proposal for a presentation on this theme for its programme at The Congress 2007. In the two hour programme, we aim to have four or five presentations covering this subject.

The audience is likely to include librarians from who have responsibility for newspaper libraries, in the national and public library domain, and archives which include newspapers.

We are particularly interested in presentations on the following topics although other topics will also be considered

- how technology is currently affecting the circulation of printed newspapers
- developments in technology in the coming years leading to increased access to news
increased access to runs of older African newspapers via digitalisation

We hope to have a mix of presentations from Africa. The delivery of each presentation should last 5-10 minutes, as it is intended that each speaker will be a Panel Member for the discussion which will invite active audience participation. The written version of the presentation may be longer (at least 3 single spaced pages to 20 pages maximum), and these will be published on IFLANET. Full papers will be due by 15 April 2007 to allow time for review of papers. Presentations, as well as papers, will be delivered in English as a first preference.

Please send an abstract of your proposed paper (maximum 400 words), full contact details and a short CV to:

Ed King,
Secretary
IFLA Newspapers Section
E-mail: ed.king@bl.uk
by 31 October 2006.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the review panel by January 2007.

Regrettably IFLA's Sections do not have funds available to pay for speakers' expenses, although there may be limited funding available through other IFLA channels, especially for people from developing countries.

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