Reviews

Edited by Adrian Cunningham

Sustainable Economics for a Digital Planet: Ensuring Long-Term Access to Digital Information: Final Report of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access, February 2010, iv + 110 pp. Available at <*http://brtf.sdsc.edu/biblio/BRTF_Final_Report.pdf*>.

Arguably, the biggest challenge for digital preservation is not technical, but economic: how do organisations get enough resources to undertake digital preservation over a long period of time? *Sustainable Economics for a Digital Planet: Ensuring Long-Term Access to Digital Information* is an examination of digital preservation as an economic activity, rather than a technical or organisational activity. It identifies structural challenges for organisations in attempting to mobilise resources over the long term to preserve digital information. The report should be of interest to people who have to deal with digital preservation at a strategic level – particularly those that have to prepare business plans proposing investment in digital preservation.

One of the key principles of economics is that it does not matter who or what you are, you do not have the resources (money, time or people) to do everything that you want to do. The consequence of this principle is that individuals, organisations, and societies must carefully choose where they spend their limited resources to achieve the maximum payoff. One theme in economics, then, is how to maximise your return when you apply your limited resources. Another theme is to identify barriers that discourage expending resources to achieving desirable outcomes. Typically, these barriers are inherent characteristics of a particular activity or object. For example, a characteristic of a digital object is that it can be duplicated at essentially no cost, and this can discourage organisations

from expending resources on preservation as it is difficult for the organisation to capture any reward for this expenditure.

The specific economic problem examined in *Sustainable Economics for a Digital Planet* is ensuring the ongoing and efficient allocation of resources to digital preservation with the goal of achieving long-term access to digital information. The report is the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access (their home page is <*http://brtf.sdsc.edu/*>). This group was created in late 2007 and is funded by the United States' National Science Foundation and the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, in partnership with the Library of Congress, the Joint Information Systems Committee of the United Kingdom, the Council on Library and Information Resources, and the United States' National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The group published an interim report (available at <*http://brtf.sdsc.edu/biblio/BRTF_Interim_Report.pdf*>) in December 2008, and a final report (available at <*http://brtf.sdsc.edu/biblio/BRTF_Final_Report.pdf*>) in February 2010.

In this review of the final report, I will assume that ensuring long-term access to digital information is a desirable outcome, and I will not discuss the sections of the report that cover why long-term access to information is important, or that discuss how information today is largely digital.

After explaining the purpose and background to the report in section 1, the next section is a short tutorial on economics as applied to digital preservation. Preserved digital assets have four key attributes as economic goods:

1. The demand for digital preservation is a derived demand. People actually want access – preservation is merely a means to that end. This means that demand for preservation should always be expressed as a demand for future access. It also means that decisions to preserve will be based on the perceived value of the material over time. This causes problems for market based solutions as the demand is not well understood into the future, or comes from stakeholders who are not well represented in the preservation decision.

2. Digital materials are depreciable durable assets. That is, they will produce a flow of value over time (an asset), with the flow decreasing over time unless effort is made to maintain the asset. The effort in this case is the preservation actions necessary to maintain access. It is necessary to expend resources over time to maintain access.

3. The digital preservation process is temporally dynamic and path dependent. Organisations must expend resources over time in preserving digital assets, but they have a choice about when they will expend the resources and on what activities. However, the future ability (and costs) to use digital assets depends on the particular decisions that have been made over time. By modelling the life of digital assets it is possible to identify the points of risk to preservation and prepare contingency plans for them. Points of risk occur where an organisation must expend more resources on the preservation than the worth of the asset to the organisation. A contingency plan could, for example, be a hand-off to another organisation (for example, an archive).

4. Digital assets are non-rival in consumption and create a free-rider potential. Non-rival means that the asset can be shared by many people with essentially no incremental cost. While this would seem to be a good thing – non-rival goods allow substantial economies of scale – it is difficult to set up market based production or distribution systems for non-rival goods as it is difficult for a market to capture their value. In particular, non-rival goods suffer from the free-rider effect – once someone preserves the asset, it is preserved for all. Consequently, the incentive for any single party to incur the cost of preservation is weakened as all wait for other parties to act giving the others a free ride on the benefits.

These characteristics are not individually unique to digital assets, and economics has developed strategies for dealing with the negative impacts of these characteristics. Section 3 considers the application of these strategies to the problem of digital preservation. For example, given the path-dependent nature of digital assets and difficulty in determining future value, the authors suggest that it is economically justified to make a small initial investment in preservation that leaves

open the option of making larger investments later when the demand for the asset has been clarified (with the implication that the asset might be discarded or passed off to someone else if the demand does not materialise, or the cost of preservation is too high). The major questions considered in this section are what to do when:

- demand for digital assets is diffuse or weakly articulated (that is, value is hard to quantify)?
- the future value of digital assets is uncertain?
- there are insufficient incentives for the owners to preserve assets?
- the incentives to preserve are misaligned between the organisations that control, preserve, and provide access to the digital asset?
- roles and responsibilities among stakeholders and actors are unclear?
- the benefits from assets no longer outweigh the costs of maintaining them?

This section also considers models for cost recovery to pay for ongoing preservation.

The economic strategies that can be successfully applied depend on the context of the organisations involved. To validate the theoretical treatment given in the previous two sections, and illustrate potential strategies, section 4 of the report analyses digital preservation in four content domains:

- scholarly discourse - this covers the published output of scholarly inquiry such as scholarly journals;
- research data - this covers the preservation of data collected or generated by researchers doing their research (examples range from deep space imaging to social science surveys);
- commercially owned cultural content - this covers culturally significant content under copyright protection such as films, books, and multimedia productions; and,
- collectively-produced web content - the best example of this category being the content found in *Wikipedia*.

For each domain the report considers: the value of the digital asset and their selection for preservation; incentives to preserve; roles, responsibilities and funding; and concludes with recommendations for the future of preservation in that content domain.

The final section provides some generic recommendations for achieving sustainability in digital preservation. These are to:

- Plan for the future. Organisations holding digital assets should: take preservation steps early in the digital lifecycle; create and codify contingency plans; and make and implement plans for handover of assets to address economic risks over the digital lifecycle. Digital preservation is a sequence of actions by multiple actors and stakeholders over the lifetime of digital resources. Digital assets can be at great risk when an organisation changes its preservation priorities. Contingency plans should be made in advance and might include handing off materials to responsible organisations such as libraries, archives and museums. The role of these stewardship organisations will become more important as information becomes digital and their funding must match this vital national mission.
- Be clear about the value of digital assets. The value should be articulated in terms of use cases, particularly identifying at-risk materials that must not be lost. It is especially important to represent future stakeholders, whose interests are always under-represented, when determining value. Proxy organisations (for example, libraries, archives and museums) that represent users can be used to aggregate diffuse demand. Where value is uncertain, expending a small amount of resources to buy time while value clarifies can be prudent.
- Make decisions about priorities among collections competing for scarce resources based on projected future use. Give priority to those materials of greatest use to present and future stakeholders. Selection decisions should reflect the interests of future as well as current stakeholders; therefore selection processes are often best entrusted to proxy organisations to represent the interests of present and future stakeholders. In those cases, it is vital that the proxy organisations have well-articulated and transparent selection procedures.

- Where there are insufficient incentives to preserve, use preservation mandates (that is, forcing owners to preserve) as appropriate. Providing financial incentives for private owners to preserve on behalf of the public can encourage preservation. Bring copyright law and mandatory deposit requirements up to date for digital preservation. Remove barriers to creating efficient decentralised stewardship mechanisms by use of non-exclusive licenses granting preservation rights to third parties.
- Create effective governance mechanisms to aggregate and rationalise collective preservation interests and costs. Create mechanisms to address free-rider problems in the provision of preservation. Be clear and transparent about roles and responsibilities.
- Choose funding models according to the norms and expectations of anticipated users; leverage economies of scale and scope; lower costs of preservation overall as the amount of material continues to increase. Market forces can work for some materials for some time, but it is essential to have provision for handover to a trustworthy steward when its owner no longer wishes to keep an asset and it is still of value to society.

The report concludes with a set of agendas for further action targeted at organisations, technical capacity, public policy, and education. Seven appendices provide a more discursive discussion about particular aspects of the report.

From a practical perspective, the report will be of most use to those who need to deal with digital preservation at a strategic level, particularly to those who are trying to garner resources for digital preservation, or those proposing major initiatives. Many of the findings and recommendations would not be a surprise to people working at the strategic level, but it is useful to have the problem articulated in an economic framework as this is one of the languages of government.

The most glaring omission of the report, to an archivist, is the lack of consideration of digital records. This is despite NARA being one of the partners in the taskforce. Two questions arise from this omission: would consideration of digital records change the

recommendations and findings, and how well would the economic framework presented apply to digital records? One of the appendices (dealing with characteristics of sustainability in public and corporate records) does provide a three-page overview of federal government, and corporate recordkeeping and archiving in the United States. This appendix almost presents the digital preservation of records as a solved economic problem, at least in the government sphere. I doubt any archivist would consider that they have sufficient resources to tackle the challenge of preservation of digital records, and it would be an interesting research project to apply the framework of four content domains presented in section 4 to records.

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Elizabeth H Dow, *Electronic Records in the Manuscript Repository*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2009. xvii + 189 pp. ISBN 978 0 8108 6708 6 (paperback); ISBN 978 0 8108 6709 3 (e-book). $US45.00.

While the challenges of managing electronic records have occupied centre stage for government and in-house archivists for twenty years or more, collecting archivists working with private records have by and large been less engaged in the topic and undoubtedly far less well-served by the available professional literature. It is pleasing to report, though, that things are belatedly starting to change for the better with the appearance of some useful case studies and the advent of the highly significant Paradigm research project in the United Kingdom.

We can now add to this emerging body of literature this terrific book from Scarecrow Press, which is aimed squarely at practitioners seeking practical advice on how to manage born-digital private records that are offered to them by donors and depositors. Elizabeth Dow, who teaches at Louisiana State University, has written a highly readable and eminently useful manual for collecting archivists wishing to grapple with the scary and unfamiliar prospect of acquiring, managing, preserving and providing access to born-digital private records. In so doing she has filled a major gap in our suite of professional tools and manuals.

In 200 pages Dow takes the reader from a high-level and necessarily somewhat abstract introduction to the issues, concepts and strategies associated with electronic personal records, through to highly practical descriptions of technologies, tools, tactics and approaches to implementation. She does a masterful job of demystifying the topic and providing sensible advice that is soundly grounded in the broader electronic records literature. In fact, Dow has synthesised an enormous and impressive array of literature – thus saving the average time-poor practitioner the trouble of navigating their way through the enormous and perplexing variety of electronic records literature.

Sound pieces of advice in the early chapters include the need to: collaborate with professional, political and technical partners; develop policies; improve your records management knowledge; learn the language of information technology; and to become familiar with models and requirements for digital repositories and also with relevant metadata standards. The role of metadata is well explained though, somewhat surprisingly, there is no mention of the international standard for records metadata, ISO 23081. In common with almost all the literature on digital archiving, insufficient advice is provided on how to adapt archival systems and processes to manage the complexities of what is often extensive and heterogeneous contextual recordkeeping metadata. The impact of Web 2.0 technologies is explored, though again, somewhat surprisingly, there is no discussion about the particular challenges posed to collecting archivists of the growing tendency for individuals to have their private records stored in scattered locations around the so-called 'cloud'.

A variety of different approaches to digital preservation are well explained, with the pros and cons of each covered succinctly and clearly. My only real quibbles here are that emulation and web archiving are covered all too briefly, probably providing insufficient information to enable practitioners to make informed choices about actual implementation strategies.

Chapter 7 addresses the vital issue of working with donors to help them do a better job of making and managing their personal digital archives. While the challenges of influencing records creating behaviour in unregulated environments are fully acknowledged, the

chapter provides many sensible suggestions for overcoming donor reluctance and bad record-making habits. The DIRKS methodology is explored as one potential approach that could be deployed. The chapter concludes by saying: '... most donors do not recognize the fragility of their computer-based life's work. Once over the initial shock of the bad news, they will welcome you. Reach out to them.' (p. 134)

Finally, some of the best features of this book are its extremely useful bibliographies and guides to essential tools and other resources.

Elizabeth Dow has produced a must-read book for all collecting archivists. It is to be hoped that she can publish regular future updated editions of the book in recognition of the need to keep pace with important developments in what is unquestionably a fast-moving field, where relevant new tools and projects are emerging with increasing and pleasing frequency.

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Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA), inForum 2010 Annual Convention, Gold Coast Convention Centre, 5–8 September 2010.

Attending the inForum Conference for the first time proved an interesting, enlightening and rewarding experience. The conference was jam-packed with presentations, workshops, social events and vendors. Getting the most out of the conference required careful planning in advance to avoid missing the presentations and workshops that seemed the most interesting and informative, and to allow enough time to investigate all the trade stands and make the most of the vendors on hand.

Presenting a ten minute talk at the Education SIG from a student's perspective on 'Surviving Online Learning' provided an opportunity for stepping outside my comfort zone and was a rewarding experience. Thank-you to everyone for listening and to those who sought me out amongst the crowd to discuss the issues presented. This is an event I would encourage any educators or students, past, present or prospective, to attend.

Selecting from the wide range of presentations was a difficult choice. Nevertheless, the presentations by Dr Bettina Schmidt-Czaia and Dr Kelvin White were particularly inspiring and memorable. Schmidt-Czaia spoke of the tragic disaster that struck the Cologne Historical Archives in March 2009, the recovery process to date and the projected timeframes and process for restoring the recovered items and building a new facility. Having followed this story since the first images appeared online in March 2009, I still found the recount of absolute devastation, courage and global unity, humbling and inspiring - something we can all learn from. White explained the difficulties of memorialising the history and culture of societies which do not have any form of textual records. He described the complexities of ensuring authenticity, integrity, reliability and accessibility in preserving oral (factual ballads) and kinetic (dance) 'records' to ensure their survival for future generations. This intriguing presentation and White's call for archivists to be trained with the skills to develop flexible and innovative strategies to ensure that non-textual records are preserved alongside traditional textual records was compelling and inspiring.

Steamatic's disaster recovery workshop, 'Road to Recovery: Taking the first steps', provided a truly hands-on experience. After an informative slide presentation with numerous images depicting real disaster scenes, attendees practiced removing soot and dirt from recovered articles using a vacuum and conservator's table, and then a smoke sponge to remove finer particles. This was followed by correctly packing-out burnt items, then recovering water-logged items from a child's wading pool and packing-out these items.

Sushil Gujwani's presentation, 'Challenges of converting paper files to electronic documents', gave attendees a broad overview of the processes which need to be considered when embarking on such a digitising project, including selecting appropriate hardware and software to meet individual requirements. This presentation was very informative, especially in relation to new software technologies which allow items to be saved in multiple formats such as full colour, grey scale and colour dropout (which removes the template part of a form but retains the data entered) from a single scan.

The change management breakfast not only provided a wonderful breakfast, but also an impromptu opportunity to match names to faces by 'ticking-off' attendees at an early hour (surprisingly, most people did not mind being ticked off so early in the day!). A light-hearted presentation - involving a quiz, snakes and ladders and the inevitable squabble over rules - on what can be a difficult and complex issue provided a novel and enjoyable way to start the day.

'Getting started on digital recordkeeping systems with open source software' (Alfresco) really put the 'work' into workshop. This was rather more demanding and complex than I had expected. Nevertheless, active participation proved rewarding, so I came away much better informed about the complexities of setting up a digital recordkeeping system. This workshop really put theory into practice and demonstrated that there are no shortcuts to implementing a sound, reliable and useable system; the groundwork at development stage must be thorough.

To get the most out of any conference, planning is essential. One of my greatest difficulties was squeezing in enough time with exhibitors. With hindsight, I could have skipped David Schulz's light-hearted but long-winded presentation on quantum physics. Eventually he made some points about hierarchical file systems and metadata, but I was still imagining golf balls as atomic nuclei - and could have spent my time more constructively in the Trades Hall. Sharing a dinner table at Movie World with exhibitors provided stimulating conversations on the topic of employment opportunities for graduates; especially opportunities outside the square. Throughout the conference I was pleasantly surprised at the number of vendors who, once they knew I was a student nearing the completion of my studies, suggested that I should contact them after the conference regarding work possibilities. I highly recommend students take the opportunity to attend the RMAA inForum Conference if they possibly can.

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Elizabeth Masters and Ian Batterham, *Keeping Family Treasures*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2010. 160 pp. ISBN 978 1 920807 77 1 (paperback). $24.95.

This is another good-looking publication from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) which provides useful advice to the public on how to care for a range of different types of family treasures. A number of individuals, some widely known public figures, were asked to present their family treasure, and NAA conservators then provided advice on how best to care for that item. The clever use of photographs also helps to tell the story of the treasured family item and assists in visualising its treatment and storage.

The first nine chapters focus on a particular format – letters and personal papers (Samantha Faulkner); photographs and photo albums (Margaret Fleming); diaries and notebooks (Alice Garner); scrapbooks (Hayley Jensen); precious objects and textiles (Margaret Fulton, Andy Muirhead, Steve Dyer, Kim Huynh); tapes (Jan Swift); home movie films; CDs and DVDs; and, time capsules. The last two chapters are on storage and what happens when disaster strikes. There is also a 'question and answer' section and three appendices: professional help; archival products; and, converting to digital.

After each of the stories and individual conservation advice, there are pages of advice that can be easily followed and applied by people at home. For example, the caring for photographs section covers advice on handling, writing captions, preserving damaged items, storage, choice of album, negatives and transparencies, display of items, copying, old negatives, and digital photographs, including back-up of images. This is a very comprehensive coverage of a topic that everyone needs advice on.

Surprisingly there is no index, which disappointed me. Perhaps the format of the book, with clear chapters on specific mediums, allows people to find what they are looking for easily. Nevertheless, I think there are also some common themes and issues which could have been highlighted by including an index.

The inclusion of a glossary would also have been useful, as some terms may not be readily known by the reader. Some terms are explained

throughout the text but they are not grouped together. As most readers will probably read chapters individually as needed, they may be puzzled by a term that is explained in another chapter which they have not yet read.

Also missing is a bibliography referring to other similar publications and there are also a number of useful websites that could have been referenced. For example, my own book *Your Family History Archives: A Brief Introduction* is targeted at the same audience but does not cover in-depth conservation advice as is the case in *Keeping Family Treasures* (also see separate review by Sebastian Gurciullo in this section).

Overall the book is written in an easy to read and understand style with lots of practical advice that the public can use when caring for their own family treasures. It is aimed at genealogists and family historians and I think it has achieved its objectives. The brief histories associated with the featured family treasure will also be of interest to the target market and highlight records within the NAA collection.

This is a publication that will be repeatedly referred to, helps fill a gap in the market and is priced to suit its target audience.

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State Records New South Wales, *Old Register One To Nine: The Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments*, State Records New South Wales, Sydney, 2008. No ISBN. DVD. $125.00 including postage and handling. Available from State Records New South Wales and may be ordered online or by downloading an order form. All proceeds from sales go towards the conservation of the old registers.

This DVD was an ASA 2008 Mander Jones Award winner in Category 3A – Best finding aid to an archival collection (1) held by an Australian institution, or (2) about Australia; produced by an organisation deemed eligible for Category 4 (5) (a) institutional membership.

Despite the odd and cumbersome title, this DVD has much to offer anyone researching in New South Wales between 1794 and 1824. *Old Register* is actually nine registers preserved by the NSW Department

of Lands and the DVD was created in cooperation with State Records NSW. It contains comprehensive searchable indexes and digitised copies of the registers.

The registers not only contain entries relating to land transactions but also promissory notes, power of attorney entries, leases, mortgages, sales, receipts and payments relating to livestock and crops, apprentice and work agreements, marriage and separation agreements and so on. The range of topics covered means that it provides a very good description of life in early New South Wales, and about the people living there and carrying out normal day-to-day activities. There is a very comprehensive article on its use by Marilyn Mason entitled 'The Birth of Our Community: Find Stories of NSW between 1794 and 1824' on a new DVD *Old Register One To Nine* in *Australian Family Tree Connections*, October 2009.

The DVD is not really user-friendly and I actually found it a little frustrating to use but it is worth persevering because the information it contains is so useful and interesting. There are two folders on the DVD – one for the index and one for the registers. The index folder has four PDF files with the information sorted differently in each. The idea is to locate references to what you are researching, note all the references and then go to the second folder and view the actual entries.

Using some of my own family names I searched the four index PDF files and got different results from each so I would advise to do this although it does take a bit longer. The different arrangements allowed me to locate references to a particular person whose name was spelt in different ways in different entries. In the 'from' index they were grouped almost together which allowed me to pick them up, whereas in the 'to' index they were widely separated.

I managed to find a number of references to the family I was researching, so I then went to the old register folder and selected the PDF register files that I wanted, entered the page numbers and the entries came up. The digitisation is of a high standard, easy to read, and certainly quicker and cheaper to use than taking a trip to Sydney.

Given the high cost of the DVD, I would have expected an easier search capability given that the primary users of a DVD like this would be

genealogists and family historians. I also suspect that the cost may be a deterrent to people buying a copy for themselves and it may be that many will only use it in libraries, if at all. Given its interest and value for early New South Wales research I believe it should be more widely known and used, and hopefully this review will see researchers seeking it out.

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Bruce Kercher and Brent Salter (eds), *The Kercher Reports: Decisions of the New South Wales Superior Courts, 1788 to 1827*, The Francis Forbes Society for Australian Legal History, Sydney, 2009. 895 pp. ISBN 978 097511 0355 (hardback). $100.00.

This publication is a compilation of early court records of New South Wales between 1788 and 1827. It is chronologically arranged, with each year represented by a select number of cases capturing the earliest legal decisions in the new colony. While it is very much a legal text, it also has relevance as a work of history in that it outlines what was happening in the colony and key persons from those years.

All the cases in this publication are also available online at the Macquarie University website where it is part of a long-term project of uncovering and publishing the hidden case law of the Australian colonies. The project started over ten years ago and to date includes NSW cases from 1788 to 1842, Tasmania from 1824 to 1843, and a similar project is starting up in New Zealand.

Case selection for this publication was based on a number of factors including an emphasis on superior court decisions, with more criminal cases than civil cases. Unusual cases and most of the cases involving Aboriginal people have been included. At least one case has been included for each year.

The cases have been transcribed and edited to a modern standard which makes them very easy to read but does take away from the language and spelling of the times in which they were originally written. The editors' notes explain the difficulties they had and should be read before looking at the individual cases.

There is a very useful summary of the various courts in existence at the time and brief profiles of the judges: David Collins, Richard Atkins, Richard Dore, Ellis Bent, Jeffery Bent, John Wylde, Barron Field, Francis Forbes and John Stephen.

There is a list of the cases included, in addition to a glossary, a bibliography and a limited index. As all the cases are online at <*http://www.law.mq.edu.au/sncnsw*> with a search facility, there was no need to include all names of persons mentioned in the cases. The index is more of a subject listing, for example, duelling, manslaughter, piracy and so on.

Why have printed publications when the same information is available online? As the editors point out, not everyone prefers to read online and there are advantages to having a printed copy. I must confess that I looked at some sample cases both in the book and online, and I do prefer to read the printed copy. This may be a generational thing but I could flip between similar cases much easier in the printed work than online.

As I mentioned earlier, this work is primarily for use by the legal profession, but historians, genealogists and family historians will also find a use for it. It is possible to search for individuals and the individual cases provide background on what was happening in the colony during this time period.

The website also has links to similar case files online for Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and various countries. The time periods and number of case files recorded vary but it is a very useful resource which is still being augmented. I was not aware of the project until given this publication to review and it really does deserve a higher profile. Hopefully this review will achieve that purpose.

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Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, *Preserving archives and manuscripts*, second edition, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2010. xx + 521 pp. ill. appendices. ISBN 1-931666 32 6 (paperback). $US63.00 plus postage. Available from SAA at <*http://www2.archivists.org/publications*>.

This volume by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Director of the Document Conservation Division of the United States National Archives Records and Administration, is authoritative and well-presented. It is an excellent guide for archivists, other information professionals and managers responsible for preservation programs and expenditure in archival institutions. The text is supported by over one hundred pages of appendices, including a preservation glossary and bibliography. Appendix C on setting up a workspace and appendix D on basic preservation procedures are supported by clear and attractive illustrations.

The author takes the view that preservation 'broadly encompasses those activities and functions designed to provide a suitable and safe administrative context and environment that enhances the usable life of collections' (p. 3). These activities include conservation, but this is a book for archivists, not conservators. The emphasis on program planning and implementation for decision-makers is clear from the start. Chapter 2 'Implementing a preservation program', chapter 5 'Creating a preservation environment' and chapter 8 'Integrating preservation and archival management', are the key chapters here. Other parts of the book, such as chapter 3 'Archival materials as physical objects', chapter 4 'Causes of deterioration' and chapter 7 'Storing and handling archival materials', are just as well-written and well-informed as the chapters on management functions. It is, however, the discussion of preservation as a critical and universal management role in archives that is the most important contribution of this book. Its guiding philosophy is expressed thus: 'Preservation is integral to every activity in an archival repository - from the appraisal of collections through research use and exhibition' (p. 223). This message is essential for archivists to grasp, and it also needs to reach resource allocators and executive staff in organisations that maintain archival programs but whose core mission is not archives. Throughout, Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler is sensitive to preservation challenges facing small as well as large archives.

There are themes running through the text including the need for training for all archivists, volunteers and users about the properties of archival materials and how to handle them, and the wisdom of making

preservation proactive rather than reactive. Occasionally there are break-out boxes reinforcing key messages, such as this one in the section on emergencies and disasters: 'The lack of a preservation program that is a fully integrated aspect of archival management contributes as much to the quiet deterioration of materials as does the zealous application of inappropriate remedies' (p. 106).

This book is written essentially for the United States market, so the appendices on sources of advice and supplies will not be so helpful for practitioners in distant continents, nor will the chapter on storage for countries which use metric measurements (there are alternative sources on the latter, including *Keeping Archives*, third edition).

If you are looking for a one-stop source that covers digital preservation as well as 'traditional' preservation in depth, you will need to continue your search. The rapid growth of the quantity of digitised materials needing to be managed by archivists and their impact as another voice making demands on often scarce funds is acknowledged. The general focus of *Preserving archives and manuscripts* is, however, on physical materials. The author considers that today 'it is still critical to have an understanding of the common materials and structures that constitute the majority of archival holdings' (p. 43).

This is the seventh and final volume in the Archival Fundamentals Series II which the Society of American Archivists (SAA) has been publishing since 2004. Looking at the publishing environment today, it is difficult to see how a third series of print-only volumes would work. One of the Series II volumes, the *Glossary of Archival and Records Management Terminology*, is in fact available online and most of the sources of information and advice listed in the various appendices for *Preserving archives and manuscripts* include websites. Perhaps the SAA is already working on a solution involving print and online publishing. It is to be expected that future publication series planned by SAA will meet the same high standards of production and responsiveness to audience need as the current one.

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Jeanette A Bastian and Ben Alexander (eds), *Community archives: the shaping of memory*, Facet Publishing, London, 2009. xxiv + 286 pp. ISBN 978 185604 6398. £49.95 (hardcover).

First impressions can sometimes be deceptive, particularly if you are obsessive enough to read a book's introductory sections. *Community Archives* is an instalment of the series *Principles and Practice in Records Management and Archives*, edited by Geoffrey Yeo. In his short introduction to the series there are some glaring typographical errors, particularly in the first few lines. This is unfortunate because the remainder of the editing in the book is generally very good. The print quality is also something that struck me as being a little rough, looking closer to the type of print finish one usually expects to find in photocopied materials rather than commercially-produced hardback books.

Putting these relatively minor concerns aside, I found the book's contributions from an international and otherwise diverse set of perspectives to be a very good introduction to the area of community archives. Each of the contributors seeks to 'call our attention to both the salutary and the controversial acts of record making and record keeping, illustrating how these activities in themselves may create community' (p. xxi).

The central challenge for a collection such as this, as the editors readily acknowledge, is the concept of 'community' itself, its contested definitions and limits, and ultimately its meanings and purposes as a description applying to a group of people with a common identity. Likewise, the concept of 'archives' is also open to a growing range of formats, meanings and purposes, especially now in the twenty-first century with the explosion of electronic global media and systems, and the sheer proliferation of memory- and identity-making that these developments have enabled. In all of this, the notion of 'records' seems to be taken to the breaking point: alongside records as traditional notions of 'textual evidence-bearing documents' we now have various forms of 'oral expression', collections gathered by individuals and groups, 'electronic traces', 'performances and music', 'commemorations and cultural activities such as community festivals and parades', as well as 'monuments' and even 'locations' (p. xxiii)!

The editors urge readers to consider how, under conditions of post-modernity people have become increasingly disposed to track down evidence of 'marginalised identities' that can bolster 'minor narratives'. In their view, archivists need to open themselves to this demand by broadening their own horizons and expanding their understanding of what counts as a record.

There are 15 contributions in the volume spread over 5 part headings, including an introduction by the editors and a conclusion from Richard J Cox. For this reason I will focus on contributions that I found the most thought-provoking. These tended to be articles that went beyond reporting about particular projects to articulate analyses and more generalisable perspectives.

The book begins with a section on models for community archives. 'It is noh mistri, wi mekin histri', written by Andrew Flinn and Mary Stevens, clearly proposes a political role for 'independent community archives' in the UK, as a way of directly challenging and subverting mainstream historical narratives, and the archival and heritage policies that have sustained these. The model being put forward is contesting the more orthodox view that telling and preserving one's history is generally a benign leisure activity with some warm and fuzzy social benefits. Instead, the authors are arguing for a form of political action built upon more robust notions of social justice and grass-roots self-determination that unashamedly proposes a partisan role for activist-archivists.

The authors particularly focus on the notion of 'black' activism and the various struggles to reverse mainstream racism and discrimination as expressed through dominant historical narratives, and the biased collecting policies that have provided these with an abundant source of primary evidence. In the view of Flinn and Stevens, archivists should enter into alliances with social movements to undo these distortions that have rendered large segments of the UK population historically invisible.

While the activism being proposed is embraced with enthusiasm by the authors, I think that it is haunted by a political conundrum. What if a reactionary social movement wanted the mainstream to pay more attention to their own marginalised stories? Who would feel beholden to make this space available, particularly if in their ultimate ambitions

could be discerned the intention to silence the very diversity that allowed them to mount such a challenge to the status quo? In Richard J Cox's concluding chapter to this volume, 'The archivist and community', the answer seems to be that if you accommodate one you will have to find a way to accommodate the other:

> Archives are not neutral, benign, static institutions (although we have a long tradition of pretending that this is the case). They are also not just devices to create community, add self-respect or pride, and improve identity of particular social groups. In fact, if we are doing our job well, we often will hold archival materials challenging the identity or role or even value of other groups. We want the records of both the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Ku Klux Klan. (p. 257)

According the records of the Ku Klux Klan a place and legitimacy in this way, would we also feel comfortable about the Klan's contemporary members using these archives as a tool for 'struggles' and identity politics against societal marginalisation?

A concern for inclusion and cohesiveness distinguishes the next chapter which poses another model for engaging community archives. David Mander's 'Special, local and about us' charts a more bureaucratic and presumably safer engagement in the UK between mainstream institutions and community collections or archives. Mander's starting point is the long history of local records collections in county records offices and among the voluntary bodies that have sprung up beside these. In particular, Mander looks at the contributions made by Commanet, 'a not-for-profit technology support group for community archives' and the Community Access to Archives Project (CAAP), which from 2005 was supplanted by the Community Archives Development Group (CADG). Unlike the model proposed by Flinn and Stevens, Mander reports on what has been done in the name of facilitating a diversity of community collections through the provision of advice, web tools or forums, and technical support, regardless of anti-hegemonic credentials and political projects for social justice. The role of the archivist

here is more conventional in that it does not prescribe championing or allying with particular social movements but instead seeks to provide accessibility across the board, to create something like a level playing field that values inclusiveness above all else.

Part two examines the role of oral transmission in a number of cultures. By far the best of these in my view is presented by Glen Kelly in 'The Single Noongar Claim', which examines the way that Noongar people of south-western Western Australia successfully mounted their native title claim in the High Court of Australia. Kelly explores the way records produced by successive generations of non-indigenous people, particularly anthropologists, have informed perceptions about the Noongar. Whereas early observations about the native occupants of the land were straightforward, later narratives produced by anthropologists such as Daisy Bates added a layer of interpretation to their observations which cast the Noongar peoples as being in cultural and social decline, destined to soon disappear. The irony that Kelly draws attention to is that the myths propagated by someone like Bates were accorded more credence in Australian society and its legal institutions simply because they were written on paper. The more authentic and complete oral histories Noongar people circulated among themselves have usually been accorded less value because oral transmission is considered unreliable. The fact Noongars avoided disclosing this cultural information to outsiders was due to their unwillingness to have it used against them. Somehow, this was confused for a lack of cultural transmission by outsiders.

Another irony here is that the very records of government bodies that were aiming to manage the decline of the Noongar people have now become instruments that they can use against a government that refuses to recognise their unbroken claim to native title:

> The native welfare records actually helped us to establish that although people did move around, they also figured out how to exploit the system by moving around in their own traditional lands. This point was completely missed by the state and everyone else who studied Noongar people for the best part of 100 years until the Single Noongar Claim litigation. (p. 59)

Ultimately, it was the vitality of Noongar law and custom passed on as an oral record that made their case compelling, trumping the presumption that their culture had died.

Part 3 of the book explores the restorative power of community archives. Marcel Barriault in 'Archiving the queer and queering the archives' recounts the activism that brought about the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Barriault traces the social transformation that began in Canada with the case of Everett George Klippert, who on 24 August 1965 was sentenced to three years in prison for volunteering information about consenting same-sex relations in the course of a completely unrelated police investigation into a case of arson. Psychiatrists subsequently determined that Klippert was 'incurably homosexual', which permitted authorities to define him under the existing law as a dangerous sexual offender and place him under preventive detention, effectively converting his sentence into life imprisonment. The campaign to secure Klippert's eventual pardon and release in 1971 led to the creation of a new publication reporting on Canadian queer news, *The Body Politic*. Within the space of a few years, the publication's collection of documents served in 1973 as a catalyst for the creation of what would eventually become the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Despite approaches from the Archives of Ontario, the queer archives decided to operate outside the constraints of a mainstream institution to ensure they retained greater freedom. The archive was thereby more able to become the centre of a vibrant community of research and gay culture, effectively providing the queer community with the kind of collective memory it had always lacked.

The next chapter by Eric Ketelaar, 'A living archive, shared by communities of records', explores the complex of expectations that grew around the archive produced by International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Ketelaar contends that the expectations for a thorough rendering of the historical record and for healing can be met by creating what he calls a 'living archive as a place of contestation' (pp. 109–110). Because by its nature, the ICTY is a legal forum interested in nothing less than 'forensic truth', its deliberations have been unable

to give people of the former Yugoslavia a place in which to speak '*their* truth' (pp. 114–115). To make the archive of the ICTY a living archive means that it will need to be established in such a way to permit challenges, contestation and expansion by the full range of communities that seek to find some kind of truth and meaning in it.

In part 4 attention turns to the various ways in which technologies are bringing communities and their records closer together. David A Wallace in 'Co-creation of the Greatful Dead sound archive' provides a fascinating and detailed history of the taping and trading culture surrounding the performances of this 1960s counter-culture rock band. In the taping and trading of the Grateful Dead's performances we can discern the prototypes of ideas about shared ownership and co-creation that are now becoming more widespread through the rise of creative commons in the Web 2.0 world. The band allowed this community of archivists, researchers and documenters to thrive by accommodating and endorsing a phenomenon that arose spontaneously and without their prior permission or instigations. Not surprisingly, the 'Deadhead' community became some of the earliest adopters of networked computing and the emerging Web 2.0 environment. Wallace proposes that all this collective effort served the creation of an experience that had to be 'shared to be meaningfully valued as a community resource' (p. 188). Without this, it is unlikely that the band would have had the financial and artistic support to perform for three decades.

In part 5, three chapters look at the ways in which community archives can come into existence, transforming records into collective memory. Ricardo L Punzalan, in 'All the things we cannot articulate', recalls his experience organising the archives of the island of Culion in the Philippines, which from 1906 served as a leper colony during the period of American administration:

> Recording and record keeping were embedded in socio-medical practice that controlled people's lives and mobility on Culion. Records were more involved in ensuring the seamless implementation of segregation than simply passive containers of data. (p. 207)

Today, Culion's leprosy archives have been transformed to serve two functions concurrently: on the one hand 'as evidence and former

tools of community dismemberment and segregation by a former colonial regime', and on the other, 'as the embodiment of the archives' newly acquired and contemporary purpose as the symbol of community heritage and a common collective past' (p. 207). This transformation from remnants of a fading past to 'artefacts of heritage and identity' worthy of respect, came through the rituals of centennial commemoration in 2006 in which Punzalan actively participated on behalf of this community. Instead of attempting to adopt an attitude of neutrality, Punzalan suggests archivists adopt an attitude of vulnerability when mediating the role of archives as evidence and as symbols of collective community memory.

Other chapters not discussed in this review include: Patricia Galloway, 'Oral tradition in living cultures: the role of archives in the preservation of memories'; Setareki Tale and Opeta Alefaio 'We are our memories: community and records in Fiji'; Joel A. Blanco-Rivera, 'Truth commissions and the construction of collective memory: the Chile experience'; Andras Ridelmayer and Stephen Naron, 'From Yizkor Books to weblogs: genocide, grassroots documentation and new technologies'; Victoria Borg O'Flaherty, 'Overcoming anonymity: Kittians and their archives'; and Steven G Fullwood, 'Always queer, always here: creating the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture'.

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Shauna Hicks, *Your family history archives: a brief introduction*, Unlock the Past, Modbury North, South Australia, 2010. 40 pp. ISBN 978 098077 6003. $10.00 (paperback); and **Shauna Hicks**, *What was the voyage really like: a brief guide to researching convict and immigrant voyages to Australia and New Zealand*, Unlock the Past, Modbury North, South Australia, 2010. 40 pp. ISBN 978 098077 6010. $10 (paperback).

These two short guides are the first instalment of a projected series from Unlock the Past primarily targeting family history audiences, but also of potential interest to people seeking brief introductions to archival research and the preservation of collections.

Your family history archives is very easy to read, strikes a friendly tone and is completely suited to its intended purpose and audience as an introduction to caring for family archives. The book covers a wide range of topics relating to the care and preservation of family archives, with a level of detail that is appropriate to a brief introduction. There are also references for the reader who wishes to delve further on a particular matter. I particularly liked the author's own personal reflections woven into the text which humanise many of the tasks at hand and show how even a professional archivist will sometimes struggle to keep their personal collections in good order and provide them with adequate care.

Part one of the book defines 'family history archives' and advice for how records in this kind of archive should be organised. Part two covers a range of topics dealing with care of archives, from storage to preservation and conservation, and even planning to survive disasters. Part three provides advice on how to ensure that all the work and effort that has gone into creating and preserving a family archives can be shared and survive once the family archivist passes away. The book has three appendices that offer further handy advice to family archivists: a list of archival suppliers; a list of conservators; and the Records Management Association of Australasia's Personal Continuity Plan.

What was the voyage really like takes a very similar approach to exploring the various sources for discovering information about the journeys made to Australia and New Zealand since the eighteenth century. The book focuses on the transportation of convicts as well as immigrants making their own passage. While no specific collection is the focus of the research advice offered in this book, it provides a good basic orientation particularly for people interested in doing family history research in state, territory and federal archives. As someone who works in a reading room, I can see a potential for this guide (and a number of others like it on related topics) as a way of assisting first-time researchers to come to grips with the range of records that they may be able to access on convict and immigrant voyages to Australia and New Zealand.

The book begins with an historical introduction that explains the reasons why people came to Australia, the kinds of motivations and circumstances behind their undertaking such a perilous voyage. The next section

provides advice on finding out which ship someone arrived on, followed by a section that focuses on sources for finding images of ships and, failing that, information about their physical dimensions and characteristics. The largest section focuses on sources that can provide information about the voyages themselves, what the voyage being investigated was like, both through secondary and primary sources. The final two sections look at ways of finding out about shipwrecks and the fate of other ships.

Both books include a list of abbreviations, as well as select bibliographies, and short indexes to the topics discussed. They are good value for money and make excellent introductory texts.

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Richard Overy, *War in the Pacific 1941–1945*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2010. 58 pp. ISBN 978 1 74237 276 1. $49.99.

On 7 December 1941 the Japanese Empire embarked on a daring enterprise when it launched its surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. Less than four years later the crumbling remains of that empire were subjected to a test no other nation has since endured when a lone B-29, the *Enola Gay*, dropped the already obsolete uranium bomb Little Boy on Hiroshima. Three days later Nagasaki was also devastated and the Japanese Emperor instructed his government to surrender. As Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto had forecast, all the attack on Pearl Harbour had done was to awaken a sleeping giant, bent on revenge.

This book by the well-known military historian Richard Overy looks at the war in the Pacific from a somewhat different perspective than readers may be used to. His aim is to bring the whole vast campaign from the earliest days to the cataclysmic end alive through an exploration of recorded memories, photographs and reproductions of key documents and memorabilia.

From the earliest pages it would be fair to say that this book does not pull its punches. The war in the Pacific was long, hard and brutal, and the Japanese armed forces showed little regard for human life, which for such an artistic people is still hard to comprehend. The Rape of

Nanking would to the meanest of minds have foretold what sort of war this would be. Perhaps President Roosevelt understood this when he described to Congress the simultaneous attacks at Pearl Harbour and other American and Commonwealth targets around the Pacific in his speech in Congress as 'a date that will live in infamy'.

The character of fanaticism that would be faced by Allied forces is illustrated in the combat report 1st Lt De Vane submitted to Headquarters 1st Marine Division in August 1942. Of an estimated 670 Japanese occupying two small islands, only 13 were taken alive. He describes the fearlessness of groups of unarmed Japanese attacking fully-armed Marines as amazing.

But we learn also something of the character of the Allied combatants and where they came from. Of particular interest is the *Pocket Guide to Australia* produced for American forces serving in Australia in which we are told there is no finer soldier than 'the Digger'. And the innate gentleness of most people is demonstrated by the careful tenderness with which a Japanese baby is taken to an ambulance by an American medic. The only survivor of an area of resistance on Saipan, one wonders if that baby is still alive and how he might reflect on his life.

The reader of this book will discover the unrelenting grimness of the war and the inevitable bloody end that would face both sides if it came to the point that would require the execution of Operations Olympic and Coronet. Harry Truman had an unenviable decision to make in July 1945, whether to invade the Japanese home islands and face the prospect of up to 1 million Allied casualties and millions of Japanese deaths, or demonstrate the approaching Armageddon to the Japanese people in the hope that it would convince their government that there was no option but to surrender. Even then it was a risky proposition, but thankfully they did surrender and the horrible prospect of invasion was avoided. If nothing else, this book should demonstrate that there are no winners in war, only those that prevail to bring the killing to an end.

I thoroughly recommend this book to new students of the war in the Pacific and to those looking for a different perspective from the more academic texts.

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