

Integrity in Government through Records Management: Essays in Honour of Anne Thurston, edited by James Lowry and Justus Wamukoya, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, 247 pp., £70.00, ISBN 978 1 472428 45 5 (hardback), 978 1 472428 46 2 (ebook-PDF), 978 1 472428 47 9 (ebook-ePub)

It is obvious when reading *Integrity in Government through Records Management* that the authors have a real respect and affection for the work of Anne Thurston. This book is a celebration of Thurston's pioneering work in establishing the International Records Management Trust and her ground-breaking work in promoting and redefining records management in Commonwealth countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. It is also a tribute to Thurston's instrumental efforts in designing a new MA course in Records and Archives Management (International) at University College London, as well as a post-graduate research program.

The book brings together numerous contributors from around the world to discuss key issues of records as evidence for accountability, transparency and the protection of citizens' rights. Case studies interspersed with theoretical and practical perspectives provide a wide range of views on the intersection of records management, public administration and international development.

The book is divided into five sections covering:

- Thurston and the International Records Management Trust;
- Colonial and Post-Colonial Recordkeeping;
- Records, Governance and Transparency;
- Digital Records Management and Preservation; and,
- Reflections.

Many of the essays are written by colleagues and former students of Anne Thurston, providing a rich variety of perspectives of her work and the influence she has had on the records management world.

Section one showcases some of Anne Thurston's major initiatives, including addressing archival backlogs in Commonwealth Africa and the management of current and semi-current records in countries such as the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ghana. Other essays in this section cover Thurston's work in developing training resources on records and archives management and improving records management in the teachers' payroll system in Sierra Leone. This section provides much detail about the establishment of various projects and Thurston's role in them. It provides useful background information and a history of Thurston's work for those who may not be so familiar with her role, as well as interesting insights into the projects covered.

Section two, Colonial and Post-Colonial Recordkeeping, resonated the most with me, in particular the essay by Paul Lihoma on the restriction of access to records in Malawi between 1964 and 1994 and the essay by Lokoko Kenosi on preserving and providing access to records of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Both essays are important reminders of why we do what we do as archivists in preserving and making archives accessible to the world. They demonstrate the importance of archives in contributing to democratic, transparent and open government and that without access to archives, a one-sided view of the world is presented.

The essay by Peter Mazakana in this section also resonated with me in my current role as we contemplate the impact of organisational culture in helping or hindering change. It was refreshing to read that these challenges are not unique to the public service in Australia and indeed seem to be universal across public sectors around the world. The resistant and unchanging nature of the public service is a constant that we all battle with on a daily basis.

Section three, Records, Governance and Transparency, again uses case studies in Ghana and Uganda to demonstrate the importance of records for government accountability. This

is particularly relevant in the area of records available for Right to Information/Freedom of Information, which in turn supports the tenets of open and transparent government.

Section four, Digital Records Management and Preservation, covers a pressing challenge for many of us including my own organisation, which is grappling with the challenges of establishing a digital archive. Reassuringly, the authors cover topics we have been discussing internally such as the meaning of trusted records in the digital world. It is comforting to know that these challenges are universal yet slightly unnerving that they are still yet to be solved.

Section five, Reflections, is a fitting conclusion to this series of essays as it outlines Thurston's contribution to the education of archivists at University College London and the continuing need to promote and foster archives in developing countries.

I admit that before reading this book I had not encountered Anne Thurston's work. Nevertheless, it is obvious that she is an archival force to be reckoned with and has been instrumental in making changes that continue to have an impact both in the UK and in many African countries. It is refreshing to see as an archivist and a woman that Thurston's work is universally celebrated and acknowledged in this well-written and thought-provoking collection of essays.

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Description: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections, edited by Kate Theimer, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, 198 pp., USD\$61.00 (paperback), ISBN 978 0 810890 93 0

How many ways can there be to describe archives? It can be tempting to assume that the standards, codifications, textbooks and tools that archivists have available cover the field thoroughly. But practising archivists also know that we face significant challenges – limited resources and competing priorities, the nature of born-digital records, complex or otherwise difficult collections, to name just a few – that struggling on with standard practices will not meet. As in other areas of our professional practice, we need to innovate.

This is the first title in a series on *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, edited by Kate Theimer, an American archivist, author and blogger. The other titles cover outreach, reference and access, management, appraisal and acquisition, and educational programs. This title comprises 11 case studies which, in Theimer's words, 'show a range of concerns and strategies, but [which] were all selected because they demonstrate ideas that could be transferred into many other settings' (p. vii). Each case study is structured in a standard way, with sections covering planning, implementation, results and lessons learnt, as well as an introduction and conclusion.

In a publication produced in the United States, naturally, North American case studies predominate: seven are from the USA and one is from Canada. The others are from Australia, Iceland and Scotland. They come from a range of institutional settings, but most are from university or college settings. The case studies reveal a range of institutional arrangements and traditions within this sector that affected the approaches taken. Otherwise, there are two case studies from national archives and one from a major historical society.