

NEWS NOTES FROM OTHER REPOSITORIES

A. The University of Sydney

The University of Sydney Archives has recently had a new repository built. This is fitted with Compactus shelving, with air-conditioning and de-humidifying equipment. The University Archivist, Mr D.S. Macmillan, reports that this additional facility is making a great difference to his work. It is a comparatively small repository, but it is the first really suitable accommodation the University Archives has had. The old vaults previously used, and the present main repository, were not only inadequate of themselves as far as space is concerned, but were also something of a fire hazard.

B. The A.M.P. Society

Miss Margaret Anderson resigned from her position as Archivist of the A.M.P. Society (stationed at Head Office, in Sydney) at the end of 1961, in order to go to Britain and the Continent of Europe on a working holiday. During her time with the Society she was largely responsible for sorting out the non-current records (many of which were in a state of disorder) and for setting up an adequately classified and indexed archives. At the time she left the work was substantially completed, and the maintenance of the archives including the processing of additional material will probably eventually be taken over by the library staff.

Early in 1962 the Society moved into the new building at Sydney Cove and the archives are now housed under much better conditions than formerly. The boxed material (about 120 boxes) is now accommodated on new standard steel library shelving, four boxes to each shelf, as an adjunct to the Library. The unboxed material is stored in metal cabinets with doors to exclude dust.

When the Society's old building at 87 Pitt Street, Sydney, was being demolished, in October this year, three jars containing documents and newspaper were discovered. The first had been placed beneath the original foundations in 1877, and others dated from extensions made in 1910 and 1917. These have now been added to the archives.

C. The University of Melbourne

The Archives of the University of Melbourne were established in July 1960 for the purpose of attending to the University's own records and obtaining records from outside sources for use by research scholars.

In the latter case the University has concentrated on business records and these are now held from over seventy diverse sources,

some notable examples being records of:

Huddart Parker Ltd. (Shipping).
Melbourne Steam Ship Company.
Australian Mutual Provident Society (Victorian Branch)(Insurance).
R. Werner & Co. Pty Ltd. (Refrigeration engineers).
Dennys Lascelles Ltd. (Woolbroking).
Swallow & Ariell Ltd. (Biscuit making and sugar growing).
Graham Bros. & Co. (General agents and merchants).
Edward Duckett & Sons. (Wholesale hardware).
Blake & Riggall (Solicitors).

All accessions are gassed with Methyl Bromide to kill book lice and other pests, and when necessary vacuum cleaned. The repository is fully treated to counter silverfish. The records are arranged on a functional basis and classified according to a composite running number system e.g. 36 (accession no.)/1 (first group)/3 (third main class of records)/6 (sixth sub-class)/7 (seventh item). Indexes are being developed to cover title of accession, person, place, subject.

Records are stored on adjustable steel shelving. When possible they are boxed in a strong and inexpensive cardboard container which comes in an easily assembled collapsed form and makes up into a well sealed box of easily managed size (15" x 4½" x 9½").

The Archives are staffed by an Archivist, Senior Assistant Archivist, and Assistant Archivist, and are established as a Section within the Vice Chancellor's Department. There is close co-operation with the University's departments of Economic History and History, and the Business Archives Council of Australia (Victorian Branch). The Council will shortly be publishing a booklet, prepared by the Archivist, which sets out for businessmen the principles of record management, the value of their records to themselves and to scholars, and provides a sample disposal schedule.

This will be followed by the publication of a guide to the Victorian business records held by the University and other institutions, and a series of detailed inventories of the more important lots held.

The University's experience is that whilst many business records are mismanaged and die young in Victoria the business community is showing a strong spirit of co-operation and their strong rooms are yielding a rapidly increasing flow of material of very great value.