

## NEWS NOTES

### **Archives Office of New South Wales**

The Archives Office of New South Wales reports that a building, officially known as the Government Records Repository, Yagoona, has been leased to provide safer storage than the existing repository at Shea's Creek affords, the intention being to remove from Shea's creek all those records whose loss in the event of disaster would cause the greatest difficulty in the conduct of the government. It is capable of storing approximately 22,000 feet of records, and the Archives Office moved in on 30 August 1971. To date the staff have transferred 10,000 feet of records, and they expect the transfer to be completed in about February 1972.

Miss Dianne Patenall of the Archives staff has been offered and has accepted a scholarship from the French Government to attend the 1972 International Seminar on Archives in Paris from January to March 1972. The scholarship also provides for a further period of study of archives administration in France.

The Archives Office has continued to issue its valuable series of supplements to the Concise Guide to the State Archives of New South Wales. In the period since the last issue of this journal, the Archives Office has issued vol. 1, number 4 (October 1971) and vol. 2 number 1 (January 1972). The former of these is of quite substantial size (137 pp, plus five introductory pages) and includes entries for series in many different record groups, from Agriculture to the Western Lands Commission. The date coverage is also very wide. The latter is of much more modest size, but it is encouraging to see that the series is continuing, and that where the records being described seem to merit full treatment, the Archives Office staff are willing to go into quite intensive detail. The Archives Office deserves the congratulations of the archivists, and the thanks of the historians, of this country.

### **Queensland State Archives**

The staff of the Queensland State Archives expect early in the present year to receive approximately 215 linear feet of records from the Police Department, being files of ex-members of the Force, from 1859 to 1936. Mr. S. Ellis, the microfilm photographer on the Archives staff, has filmed the Cairns Morning Post, 24 October 1902 – 22 September 1903, the Charters Towers Mining Standard, 20 February 1896 – 10 March 1904, and also two old Survey registers. The first eleven years, i.e. from 1875, of the Western Star (Roma) arrived recently for microfilming, and other issues will follow at later dates. Owing to the late arrival of warm weather, the fumigation of records was not resumed until late in October. The microfilm cold storage unit is nearing completion, having a temperature of 50°F and a relative humidity of 20%.

### **J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History**

Miss M.F.F. Lukis, Librarian of the Battye Library of West Australian History, retired after twenty-six years of service on 31 August 1971.

Miss Lukis was appointed Archivist in the former Public Library of Western Australia in March 1945. When the archives were absorbed into the Battye Library in 1956, she was appointed by the Library Board as the first Librarian, Battye Library.

The Battye Library has greatly developed under her energetic control. In its early days, the main difficulty was to persuade West Australians that the State really had a history and that its historical records were worth preserving. This attitude has now completely changed and great quantities of family records, business and local government archives, as well as official State archives flow into the library. The library is now the only major source for local historical research and is used not only by Western Australians but also by interstate and overseas scholars.

Miss Lukis was a member of the Library Board (representing the Library Association of Australia (W.A. Branch)) from 1952 to 1955. In 1956 she was awarded a Carnegie Corporation Travel Grant to study developments in archives and local history work in the United States of America. She also visited archive institutions in Britain on her way home from America. In 1964 she was awarded a foundation Fellowship of the Library Association of Australia in recognition of her contribution to the development of archives administration in Australia. In 1967 she again visited archives in Britain during her long service leave. In 1968 she was invited by the German Government to visit that country and took every opportunity to see archives and libraries. Miss Lukis has held various offices in the Library Association of Australia and has been an examiner for the Association for some years.

Miss Lukis was President of the Archives Section in 1964 and 1965. Miss Margaret Medcalf, who has been the senior Assistant Librarian in the Battye Library since 1956 succeeded Miss Lukis in charge of the Battye Library on 1 September. Miss Medcalf is at present the President of the Archives Section of the Association.

#### **Archives Office of Tasmania**

Unless some further complication arises the Archives Office of Tasmania should be installed in its new quarters by the end of February 1972. This section has carried so many projected dates of completion, however, that the writer is beginning to feel that he will continue to contribute the same note with changed dates into the distant future.

With a little luck the office should find itself fully staffed at or shortly after the move. One new graduate position and one office assistant have been approved and two vacancies are to be filled.

#### **The University of Sydney Archives**

Following the death in March 1971 of Sir Stephen Roberts, former Vice-Chancellor and Emeritus Professor of the University of Sydney, a considerable quantity of his personal papers and research materials was received in the University Archives.

Sir Stephen Roberts wrote important works on early Australian land settlement, and on French colonialism, and several history text books. He was also interested in contemporary European history, and his book The house that Hitler built, first published in 1937 after a long visit to Germany, enjoyed wide success and acclaim. Sir Stephen Roberts was a prolific contributor of articles on international affairs to the Sydney press, and through radio (mainly the A.B.C.) from the mid-1930's to the late 1940's. His papers reflect all these interests substantially, as well as illustrating vividly the historian at work. The continuity of his research interests from his high school days at Castlemaine, Victoria, through university undergraduate days under Ernest Scott in the University of Melbourne, to his years of successful authorship, is well documented. During August and September 1971, an exhibition of letters and reviews relating to his book The house that Hitler built was held at the University of Sydney.

### **The Australian National University Archives**

The principal news item from the Archives, Research School of Social Sciences, is that the Archives Officer, Mr. R.C. Sharman (Editor of this journal) has tendered his resignation as from the end of January 1972, and is taking up the position of Assistant State Librarian, Libraries Department, South Australia. The University is advertising the position at the time that this issue goes to press, and it is to be hoped that by the time of the next issue of Archives and Manuscripts an appointment will have been made.

During the latter part of August, the whole of September, and the early part of October, the Archives Officer was absent in Britain, thanks to a decision by the Commonwealth Foundation to sponsor an inaugural meeting for the Commonwealth Library Association. The Archives Officer, as President of the Library Association of Australia, was appointed by the Standing Committee of the Association as Australia's delegate to attend the Commonwealth Library Association meeting, which took place in London on 6, 7 and 8 September. The Foundation also provided money to enable Mr. Sharman, and of course each of the other delegates from library associations throughout the British Commonwealth, to attend the International Federation of Library Associations Conference in Liverpool, 29 August to 4 September.

Unfortunately the International Federation does not have a great interest in archives. There is no Section, Committee or Sub-Committee of I.F.L.A. devoted to archives, and not one session held during a six-day meeting really had much bearing on the subject that is of most interest to readers of this journal. In the month that followed the meeting in London, however, Mr. Sharman visited archives institutions in the United Kingdom, and called upon the managements of several business firms which have had a long interest in Australia. The objective was to acquaint these businesses with the work of the Archives of the Australian National University, and to seek their possible co-operation in the accession to the A.N.U. Archives of their obsolete records.

Previous contacts had of course been made with a number of these firms. Scholars

from the University, on visits to Britain on study leave, had taken the opportunity to call on some business firms whose headquarters are in Britain, but whose operations have been restricted to, or at least concentrated on, Australia. Mr. B.D. Shields the first Archives Officer had visited Britain in 1966, and had persuaded some firms of the wisdom of transferring their obsolete records to the University. Even before this visit, the Australian Agricultural Company had deposited an extremely valuable set of material, going back to the foundation of the Company in 1824, with the Archives. This deposit of London records of the A.A. Company complemented the already rich resources of the A.N.U. Archives in pastoral records - including, of course, the records of the Australian end of the A.A. Company's correspondence.

On this occasion, the Archives Officer visited some leading firms in pastoral, shipping and manufacturing industries with a view to securing their records for the A.N.U. Archives. It is too early yet to report on success or failure, for of course business administrators have to report matters such as this to boards or committees, and these things take time. However, he was encouraged to find quite a sympathetic response from a number of firms. He was able to list a quite valuable accumulation of business records in the vaults of a shipping company, and to do some quite comprehensive listing in the strong-room of a pastoral company. Australian archivists interested in business records would do well to bear in mind the fact that there are at present great changes taking place in British industry. Several pastoral firms which have for a century or more had their headquarters in London are discovering the propriety of transferring the management of their Australian concerns to an Australian board, and in some cases the companies' Australian operations are becoming independent of London. In the shipping industry, there is such a fundamental change taking place (largely because of containerisation) that the London business scene today would scarcely be recognisable to a manager who, shall we say, had his last experience of the shipping business ten years ago, and today revisited the shipping houses of Leadenhall Street and St. Mary's Axe.

These changes are relevant for the Australian archivist (and the Australian historian) in at least two ways: companies which vest their Australian operations in an independent company are not likely to have any great interest in preserving records in London. These records may (hopefully) be sent out to Australia along with the management of the enterprise; even more likely, unfortunately, they will be destroyed. Secondly where such transformations take place in industry as are noticeable in the shipping trade, records of procedures of ten years ago are likely to be completely irrelevant from the point of view of running a business today. They are therefore likely to be destroyed.

Another fact that strikes the Australian visitor is that London is undergoing a building boom, which means also a demolition boom. Offices which firms have occupied for decades and being pulled down, and in the newer office blocks there is not much room for old records. There are also a good number of firms who find operations a lot less profitable than of yore. The passenger business, for instance, will soon be as obsolete in the British shipping industry as fore and aft schooners. If it does not pay British

shipping firms to maintain passenger services it will certainly not pay them to retain records relating to those services. The Business Archives Council is doing something to acquaint businesses about the value of old records, but one can scarcely expect the Council to regard as a first priority records relating to trade with Australia.

The Archives Officer visited the Public Record Office, where he was hospitably received by Dr. Williams, the Deputy Keeper. He also visited the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, but was disappointed to find that Mr. Roger Ellis the Secretary, was ill and away from his office. Mr. Baillie, the Assistant Secretary, received him with kindness, however, and he had interesting discussions with Mr. Richard Storey, who has done such valuable work for the Business Archives Council. Miss Mercer, the Archivist of Greater London Council, was most helpful, as was Dr. Edwin Welch, the Archivist of Churchill College, Cambridge (Dr. Welch has since emigrated to Canada, where he is lecturing at the Library School at the University of Ottawa.)

An Australian archivist on a visit to Great Britain looking at archives institutions with problems of about the same magnitude as those facing him in Australia would be well advised to visit Edinburgh. The Archives Officer visited the National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Record Office, where librarians and archivists alike were ready to describe their work and answer questions in a way that made the visits an education and a pleasure. Dr. Ian Rae of the National Library of Scotland was a host whose kindness was exceeded only by his good humour, and Mr. John Imrie, Mr. John Bates and others at the Scottish Record Office went to no end of trouble to help Mr. Sharman. Visits were also paid to the Archives of the Corporation of Edinburgh and the Manuscripts Section of the University of Edinburgh.

At Glasgow, the University is initiating the collection of business records, in much the same way that the program of collecting of the Australian National University was started. Records are being brought in to the University, because scholars need them; an archives institution is being born, without the benefit of an archivist. At the same time, the Archivist of the Corporation of Glasgow is doing quite valuable work in bringing together many different types of records, including business ones, and is co-operating with the University of Glasgow in a West of Scotland Business Archives Survey (funded by the Scottish Record Office).

Mr. Sharman's visit to the United Kingdom was not one in which the principal purpose was his own instruction in British methods of managing archives, but it was nevertheless enlightening from that point of view.

#### **Reserve Bank of Australia Archives**

During December 1971, Miss B.M. Vaughan and Mr. H.H. Day of the Archives Section paid a short visit to the Bank's Brisbane office. The purpose of the visit was to survey filing procedures and appraise accumulated old records preparatory to the relocation of the branch in new premises in King George Square.

Following the publication of a report in the "Repairers' News Sheet" of the Society of Archivists regarding the successful use of Bostik No. 6009 Cleaner/Thinner, a series of tests has been carried out with this product. Results to date indicate that it is effective in removing cellulose tape from paper. The cleaner dried quickly and for the most part, did not stain the documents. However, some coloured paper showed discolouration. Ball point pen and red ink notations did not appear to be impaired and there was no marked increase in the acidity level in paper after treatment.

An Archives display featuring the art of Vernon Lorimer was recently prepared for the information of the staff and visitors. Mr. Lorimer was associated with the Advertising Department of the Commonwealth Bank from 1923 to 1953. His artwork for advertisements and staff publications represents a unique pictorial record of the Bank's development during its most formative years. Many Australians would be familiar with war loan posters designed by Mr. Lorimer for exhibition in banks and post offices during the Second World War. We are indebted to Mr. F. Scott Halliday, Archivist of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation, for providing some of the material used in the display.

#### **Bank of New South Wales Archives**

An exhibition of records of The Australian Joint Stock Bank and The Australian Bank of Commerce was held at the former head office of those banks, King and George Streets, Sydney, during October. The move from this building prior to demolition has resulted in the accession of a considerable amount of additional records of the banks concerned.

The Archivist visited Perth and Kalgoorlie in November to survey branch records to be added to the archives of The Western Australian Bank. Plans are under way to house this excellent collection of Western Australian records in the new State chief office under construction for the Bank of New South Wales in Perth, and to make them more readily accessible for research.