

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
ARCHIVES SECTION
NEWSLETTER NO. 5 – MAY, 1973

1. Centralised Elections for General Councillors

A proposal has been made to centralise elections for General Councillors. It is probably not feasible to do this for all Sections until a standard set of rules has been drawn up for all subordinate bodies, but the Standing Committee of the LAA has proposed having a "trial run" for one or two Sections. It has been resolved that the Executive Secretary should consult with the Public Libraries Section with a view to the central office conducting the election of that Section's General Councillor for 1974 and 1975 on an experimental basis.

2. Headquarters Accommodation in Canberra

Miss J. M. Murray has agreed to undertake the feasibility study of moving the Association's headquarters to Canberra. She intends to report to the Standing Committee in June.

3. Industrial Information Officer

Gathering of this information is proceeding and efforts are being made to identify a suitable person for part-time employment in this position.

4. Vesicular Film

At the March meeting of the AACOBS Standing Committee the chairman drew the attention of members to an item on page 13 of the *Library Journal* (Bowker) for 1st January, 1973, describing the emission of hydrochloric acid gas from the Kalvar vesicular film used to microcopy the *New York Times* and produced samples of the disintegrating boxes and plastic reels which had held the film at the Fisher Library. With regard to the project proposed by Messrs. W. & F. Pascoe Pty. Ltd. to microfilm Australian Parliamentary papers using vesicular film. AACOBS resolved that the above information be given to libraries who had indicated their intention to participate in the project, and that Pascoes be informed. Pascoes are to proceed with the project in consultation with the libraries concerned, who will presumably be more likely to opt for the work to be done on silver halide film (Pascoes were also offering that option).

5. National Seminar on the Conservation of Cultural Material.

A National Seminar on the Conservation of Cultural Material will be held at the Western Australian Museum in Perth from 6th to 11th August – i.e. in the week preceding the ANZAAS Conference. The Seminar will review the present situation and discuss the fundamental problems concerned with conservation throughout Australia covering the six basic fields of fine and applied arts, libraries and archives, ethnology, archaeology, historical collections and field monuments and sites. The sessions on libraries and archives will be held on Friday, 10th August, and the convener will be Mr. F. A. Sharr. The proposed plan for the day will begin with an introductory talk by Mr. Sharr drawing attention to the many prior problems of ascertaining what is published, whence it can be obtained, selecting it, deciding what to cull and so on, and the conflicts which arise between use and conservation. It is hoped that an expert from the National Library will give a technical paper on conservation of library materials in all media. In the afternoon, leading into a general discussion, Professor G. C. Bolton, foundation Professor of History at Murdoch University, has agreed to speak on the user's point of view. The organising Secretary of the Seminar is Dr. Colin Pearson, Curator, Conservation Laboratory, Western Australian Museum.

6. The 17th Biennial Conference of the LAA

Members of the Archives Section will by now be aware of the full program for the Conference, and will probably have decided whether or not they will be attending. However, the following summary of arrangements may be useful for those who will in fact be present.

Intending participants are cordially invited to write to the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer of the Archives Section (Mr. J. M. H. Honniball, C/- Audio-Visual Education Centre, 296 Vincent Street, Leederville, W.A. 6007) if they wish to make any suggestions about the timing of functions, or about institutions and places they would like to visit.

Archives Sessions

Monday, 2-3.30: The National Film Library and Archives (Mr. G. Stone).

Tuesday, 11-12.30: The Increasing Research Demands made upon Archives by the Public (Panel discussion — Mrs. P. Fanning, Mr. W. Horton, Mr. J. Love).

Wednesday, 11-12.30: Planning and Progress in the New Building for the Archives Authority of New South Wales (Mr. J. Cross).

Thursday, 11-12.30: The Organisation and Management of a Business Archives (Mr. H. Haywood).

Friday, 2-3.30: Archives Service to the Public (Mr. P. D. Wilson).

Unfortunately there will be no overseas archivist present. An invitation extended to Mr. Maurice Bond of the Archives of the House of Lords had to be declined, and an approach in another quarter was also unsuccessful.

Special Activities Offering

Tuesday, 5.30: Section Biennial General Meeting.

Tuesday, 7.30: Play, Swan River Saga.

Wednesday afternoon: Tours.

Wednesday, 7.30: Section Dinner, Palace Hotel. Perth.

Thursday, 7.30: Play, Swan River Saga.

Section General Meeting

The time of 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 21st August, has been chosen for the Section's Biennial General Meeting. Since, however, the Section's numbers are so small, it would be reasonably easy to change it to another time, if considered desirable, even at a late stage. Alternatives are the same hour on Thursday 23rd, or 4 p.m. (or even 5 p.m.) on the Monday, Tuesday or Thursday, or again in the late afternoon on Wednesday between the Tours and the Section Dinner. The venue will probably be Stirling House, the headquarters of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, at 49 Broadway, Nedlands (one street beyond the University's western boundary).

The Play: Swan River Saga

This highly-recommended play, to be presented at the Octagon Theatre in the University grounds, is a mono-drama which encompasses a great deal of Western Australia's early history. Nita Pannell plays the part of Eliza Shaw, who came to the Colony with her husband in 1830 to settle at Belvoir, on the upper Swan. First performed at the Festival of Perth in 1972, it was written by Mary Durack, historian, novelist, and writer of children's books, who is perhaps best known for her family documentary, *Kings in Grass Castles*, (1959).

Tours

Arrangements will be made for a tour by car to include visits to the Battye Library, the local Commonwealth Archives Office, the Catholic Archives Repository, and perhaps one or two other places of interest. Again because of the Section's small numbers, there can be a good deal of flexibility about the time of the tour, and it is expected that final arrangements can be made once the Conference has started. Wednesday afternoon may be the most suitable time, but, on the other hand, visitors may prefer to join in one of the bigger tours scheduled for that time on the printed program.

Section Dinner

This will be held in a private room adjoining the dining room of the Palace Hotel. Centrally situated in Perth, the Palace is a fine example of a first-class hotel built during the gold boom just before the turn of the century. Despite the recommendation of the National Trust (W.A.), and the high regard in which many hold it, the hotel is also an example of the all-too-familiar historic building destined for early demolition.

The following extract is in a style which archivists and historians will appreciate:

De Baun's Palace Hotel. Every city has its characteristic features in the shape of trysting places and rendezvous of various kinds, and the individuality of these resorts becomes most marked in proportion as the habits of their frequenters are nomadic. De Baun's is to Perth what "Scott's" is to Melbourne, or what the famous coffee houses in and about Fleet Street were in the last century to London. The position on St. George's Terrace is unrivalled, and the building worthy of the site. It is the focus to what seem to be naturally attracted, as by a magnet, the mining men of London and of the goldfields, engineers, architects, local merchants, and representatives of all the leading firms of Europe and America who have business to do with the State. To these may, of course, be added the politician, the journalist, and the stockbroker, who, all in their various ways, have transactions to carry on with the rest.

Entering, over a flight of marble steps, the vestibule, the most rabid temperance man need not fear that his reputation will be tarnished if his movements are observed by some watchful brother. He may, after all, only be going to post a letter, for inside he finds the post and telegraph office, with a regular staff of attentive government officials, and he saves both time and trouble by despatching his missive "right here", as the Yankees say, instead of walking all the way to the G.P.O. On the hottest day, a cool breeze sweeps through the vestibule, and from breakfast-time right up to the closing hour a little representative group of loungers — the constituents of the group, of course, always varying — may be found discussing the topics of the day. It is, in its way, a sort of unregistered club, with no entrance fee, subscription, rules or executive.

If you read in the passenger lists in the morning papers that someone whom you want particularly to see has arrived by a mail steamer, it would be like hunting for a needle in a bundle of hay to search for him in the various places in Perth or Freemantle to which he may have betaken himself. But, if you step around to De Baun's, you can make a certainty of dropping across someone who knows just where the missing man is, even if the sought-for personage be not, as he probably is, at De Baun's at the very moment. Let us stand for a moment and look at the people. Here is a

genial and well-known insurance manager; he is evidently on the look-out for "biz" in his line, and his knowledge of the work of the world will probably enable him to get it. In a contemplative mood stands a quiet man with a reserved manner, who looks like a well-to-do farmer from one of the English shires. Another is a prominent mining man occupying a foremost place among Western Australia's legislators.

The little man who has just entered is a well-known journalist on the look-out for "copy". He nods cheerfully to the legislator and the insurance manager, and makes straight for the stout personage in the corner, to whom he is evidently a perfect stranger, as he commences with the conventional "Mr. . . . I presume?", like Stanley did when he met Livingstone. Like Stanley, also, he wants to interview this man, who (being a globe-trotter, and desirous of expressing his opinion on things in general, and Perth in particular) has no objection.

In the dining-room — one of the handsomest in Australia — you will find at lunch-time a number of people who are not boarders or "bona-fide" travellers of any kind; they have merely dropped in to have a quiet meal by themselves, or possibly to accept the hospitality of some "bird of passage". But, after all, the chief feature of the place is, perhaps, the big billiard and bar room upstairs, from the spacious balconies of which is to be obtained quite one of the finest town views of Perth . . .

It may be worth mentioning that the Palace Hotel was erected in 1896 by Mr. De Baun at a cost of 64,000 pounds. The building is situated at the corner of St. George's Terrace and William Street, one of the best sites in the city, commanding a beautiful view of the River Swan and South Perth.

— *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia.*
(Perth, 1901)

Prior to the erection of Leeder's Hotel on the same site in 1830, it is said that the land on which the Palace stands changed hands for a bottle of spirits!

Mr. James Bruce, Churchill Fellow

Readers of the *Australian Library Journal* will have noticed an item in the issue for February, 1973 (22, 1, pg. 29) dealing with the awarding of a Churchill Fellowship to Mr. James Bruce, document repairer-bookbinder in the Queensland State Archives. Mr. Bruce left Brisbane on 14th April this year, bound for London. He was to work within the Public Record Offices in Chancery Lane for four weeks, studying the methods of documentary repair in use in that institution. From there, he is to visit the Wolvercote Paper Mill at Oxford, and following that will spend four weeks at the India Office Library. At about the middle of June, he is to travel north to his native Scotland, for two days at the Guard Bridge Paper Mill in Fife, and at the Scottish Record Office. After three weeks leave, he is to travel to Canada, where he will spend two weeks in the Public Archives, Ottawa. Towards the end of July, he will be at the National Archives in Washington, and will return to Australia early in August.

Mr. Bruce has written a personal letter to the Editor, since he arrived in Britain, and reports that up to the time of writing, at least, his study tour had been most successful.