

## **SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ARCHIVISTS\***

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It is with some diffidence that I accepted this invitation to address you on the subject of the education and training of archivists. In the first place, this is an auspicious occasion which marks, I believe, the culmination of many years of perseverance on the part of many dedicated archivists to bring to fruition a professional association, truly representative of the best interests of all who are engaged in, or who seek to support the aims and objectives of those who are engaged in, work with archives. There will be those amongst us who were engaged in work with archives before there was an archival profession in Australia. I seek their forbearance for trespassing upon a subject where I can have no, or at best limited, personal acquaintance with the obstacles and frustrations which have beset their endeavours. In the second place, there will be those amongst us who, because of their active participation in the events about which I propose to speak, will have given much mature deliberation to the problems that confront us in contemplating the professional education of the archivist. There will be little in what I say that can be novel to them.

I believe that the archive profession in this country has, almost overnight as it were, come of age, and is in the process of having thrust upon it responsibilities and obligations which it has in the past either not been called upon to bear or which it has chosen to ignore. For the first time, archivists in Australia have discovered and, with the events of this weekend, sought to secure their independence. Their period of tutelage within the Library Association of Australia (if you will permit me the assumption that that body has in the past represented the profession of archivists in Australia) which fostered and nurtured them, has come to a close. One does not need to seek far to discover the motivating influences which have impelled archivists towards the formation of the Australian Society of Archivists.

First, archival developments have rapidly overtaken the archives profession in recent years in this country. Since 1960, when both the Commonwealth and the New South Wales State Governments adopted measures to create independent and autonomous archival authorities, several developments have occurred with sufficient impact on all concerned with the care and management of archives to demand that a body be established which may speak with an effective and united voice on all matters with which the archival profession in Australia may legitimately be concerned. In 1965 Tasmania enacted archival legislation, although administrative expedience dictated that the Library Board should act as the State archival agency. In 1973 Victoria enacted the Public Records Act which constituted an independent and autonomous archive authority. The Federal Government, in April of the same year, announced its intention to establish a national archive

\*A paper read before the Inaugural General Meeting of the Australian Society of Archivists held in Canberra, 5 April 1975.

system, and it subsequently invited Dr W. Kaye Lamb to Australia to report upon the establishment of such a system. His report, presented in September 1973, recommended that 'as quickly as may be practicable, the Archives must be given a legal charter and statutory existence'.<sup>1</sup> The decision of the Government to implement this recommendation was announced shortly afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1973 the Federal Government also announced its intention to draft a Freedom of Information Bill similar to that enacted in the United States in 1967 and subsequently appointed an inter-departmental committee, whose report was published in December 1974, to 'identify the modifications required, and any important issues involved in adapting the United States Freedom of Information Act to the Australian constitutional and administrative structure'.<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister announced in Parliament in May 1974 the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate which, in its report presented later in the year, concluded that

The Australian Government's recent initiatives with regard to Museums and Archives, together with the work which the National Estate Commission will undertake, are important moves toward improving the state of cultural property in Australia.<sup>4</sup>

It also recommended that

The Australian Government should proceed towards the ratification of the International Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1974 the Special Minister of State announced the appointment of another Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections which was required pursuant to its terms of reference

To advise on the scope, objectives and functions of an Australia Institute, to develop, co-ordinate and foster collections, research and displays of historical, cultural and scientific material of national significance, giving particular attention to its relationship with Government and other institutions;

and furthermore

To recommend longer measures in the field of museums and collections, with particular attention to the Australian Government's role in relation to State, local government and institutional authorities.<sup>6</sup>

In October 1974 steps were taken, apparently for the first time in Australia, to implement export control measures to regulate the removal from Australia of historical items. By an amendment of the Customs (Prohibited Export) Regulations under the Customs Act,<sup>7</sup> restrictions were imposed upon the export of any treaty made between aborigines and an early settler or explorer in a particular part of Australia, and in February 1975, by a similar amendment,<sup>8</sup> these restrictions were extended to include

Contemporaneous records or accounts (including books, diaries, newspapers, maps, sketches, paintings, photographs, manuscripts and other documents) of events or occurrences connected with (a) the discovery, (b) the early settlement, or (c) exploration of Australia . . . [and] goods (including compasses and other navigational instruments, watches, diaries, maps, manuscripts and other documents) that are or were . . . owned . . . or used . . . by a person associated with (a) the discovery, (b) the early settlement, or (c) exploration of Australia.

The rapidity with which these and other events have occurred in recent months, has afforded little opportunity for the professional body of archivists in this country to deliberate collectively on the issues involved insofar as they touch upon the work of the archivist. While the academic historians were sufficiently motivated by the visit of Dr Lamb to perceive the necessity for creating a forum for their own deliberations in the Australian Historical Association, the archivists, until now, have been without an effective vehicle for the projection of their own views.

The time seems ripe (Dr Lamb reported in September 1973) for the organisation of a professional association for archivists or a records association, and National Archives staff should be prominent in it.<sup>9</sup>

The formation of an Australian Society of Archivists is especially opportune at the present time for a second but equally important reason. The potential membership of such an association is now considered large enough to justify its existence, and will continue to increase as archival authorities of the Federal and State Governments, and institutional archives continue to expand their establishments to meet the growing demand for archival services. This would not itself be a sufficient guarantee of a continual source of recruitment for a professional society of archivists, except for the establishment in 1973 of the first postgraduate course in Australia leading to the award of a Diploma of Archives Administration at the University of New South Wales, and with which I have had the privilege of being associated since its inception.<sup>10</sup>

Two factors have in the past militated against the professional body of practising archivists to thwart the formation of an independent and autonomous professional association; in the first instance, as Mr Sharman pointed out in 1960,<sup>11</sup> professional membership in the Library Association of Australia has been denied to those who have not attained the Registration Certificate or its equivalent. The inevitable result, it would appear, has been the alienation of a significant proportion of potential membership of the only body with any mandate to claim representation of the professional body of archivists in Australia, notwithstanding that the membership role of the Archives Section has included at one time or another many, if not most, archivists of long experience and senior rank.

In the second instance, as Mr Sharman also pointed out,<sup>12</sup> some libraries have insisted upon demanding that applicants either possess library qualifications or study for library examinations. This has limited the field so drastically that in some circumstances recruitment to the profession in States where this has applied has been almost at a standstill.

The inauguration of the Diploma in Archives Administration course at the University of N.S.W. has, I believe, helped to create a more favourable environment within which such a professional association as we have in contemplation today may take root. I perceive this to be so for two reasons: on the one hand, the very existence of such a course, based on a distinctive and substantial area of specialised knowledge within the context of the total information

system, has tended to foster amongst its first graduates what I believe to be a new sense of identity—that is to say, a feeling of *belonging* to a distinctive profession, an emerging profession, and one that is as yet in its infancy in Australia. It is difficult, I think, for those of us who have entered upon the career of archivist by virtue of our library qualifications to identify ourselves exclusively with the archival profession, without at the same time conceding that we might not also find the field of librarianship altogether foreign to our inclinations. Perhaps for those of you unprejudiced by prior qualifications, but inducted into the profession by in-service training or mere self education, that identification comes more readily. This healthy and vigorous enthusiasm, discernible in a marked propensity amongst these new diplomates to perceive of themselves as no other than professional archivists who have maturely and deliberately chosen to pursue their careers in a field, the traditional alternative of which offers for them no incentive, deserves to be encouraged. It is I believe a further step in the progress towards establishing a professional and independent identity for the Australian archivist.

On the other hand, I believe the Diploma in Archives Administration course offers an opportunity for a greater degree of mutual co-operation and exchange amongst institutions and practising archivists not previously possible. For the first time archival institutions have a ready and assured source of recruitment to their staff. For the first time they have an opportunity to avail themselves of the facilities offered within, and to participate actively in the development of, a programme for the education and training of archivists. It is my firm opinion that if such a programme is to be responsive to the needs of the employing authorities (for whom we seek to train) it should reflect something of the goals and attitudes which they themselves seek to inculcate and foster in their own professional staff. This can best be achieved by the free exchange of information and ideas between archival institutions and those responsible for the implementation of training programmes, and a ready access to the facilities of training and research which may be afforded by both. A professional association of archivists would offer an excellent opportunity for facilitating the exchange of such information and the utilisation of such resources.

This is not to assume however that the major employing authorities will not find some faults with the present structure and objectives of the existing courses for the education and training of archivists in Australia. While these same authorities must share, in common with all archivists in Australia, some part of the responsibility for the way in which the pattern of professional education for archivists has evolved, they by no means deserve to have the whole, nor perhaps even a major part, of that responsibility attributed to them. To appreciate the circumstances which have contrived to bring about the state of affairs which exists today, we must examine a little more closely the way in which the archival profession has emerged in this country.

If we disregard the appointments of James Bonwick in 1887 as the Archivist of New South Wales (a post from which he resigned in 1902), and Edward Augustus Petherick in 1911 as Archivist engaged under the terms of the 'Petherick Agreement' (ratified by the Petherick

Collection Act 1911, Commonwealth Act No. 4 of 1911) to perform such duties as were to be allotted to him by the Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament in connection with the Petherick Collection, on the grounds that they were not primarily responsible for the management and custody of the public records of their respective governments, then there is no doubt that, although some institutions were already acting in the nature of archival depositories of public records, the first practitioner in Australia officially to bear the designation of *archivist* was George Henry Pitt who was appointed to take charge of the newly-established Archives Department of the Public Library of South Australia in 1919, a post which he occupied until 1945.<sup>13</sup> This appointment, according to Pitt, came after twelve years' experience in the Public Library of South Australia.<sup>14</sup>

As a direct consequence of wartime measures adopted by the Commonwealth Government for the preservation of its records, steps to appoint the first Commonwealth Archives Officers from within the fighting services were initiated by the Curtin Government early in 1943. Ultimately, according to Charles Bean,

Two were obtained with the necessary qualifications, and with a record of front-line service—Lieutenant K. A. Lodewyckx by the Australian War Memorial in July 1944, and Lieutenant Ian Maclean by the National Library in October of the same year.<sup>15</sup>

With perhaps some impetus also from the consequences of wartime administration, the Western Australian Government established an Archives Branch of the Public Library and in March 1945 Miss Mollie Lukis was appointed archivist to work under the direction of the Principal Librarian.<sup>16</sup>

Although the appointment of an archivist within the Public Library of Victoria was first called for in July 1932 by Professor Wood Jones, one of its Trustees, the first such appointment was not made until May 1948, when Mr D. W. A. Baker, B.A.<sup>17</sup> assumed that title, although for a very brief duration; for he resigned in December of the same year, to be succeeded by Miss R. M. McGowan in June 1949,<sup>18</sup> a post from which she also resigned one year later.

Mr Robert Sharman was the first appointee under the Tasmanian Public Records Act of 1943 to the position of Archivist within the State Library in 1949.<sup>19</sup>

By 1950-51 the Trustees of the Public Library of N.S.W. had begun to express their concern that the need had not yet been met for a properly constituted and defined Archives Department. They felt that New South Wales, like other States and other countries, should have legislative definition and protection of its official records. In any case, they said, 'the staff needs to be strengthened to deal adequately with the larger accessions in this field, and the problem of storage is increasing despite the new building.'<sup>20</sup> Consequent upon a report of a committee on which the Library was represented by the Principal Librarian and the Mitchell Librarian, the Public Service Board decided as an emergency measure to set up a government records repository at Alexandria under the control of the Library, and in November 1953 a separate Archives Department of the State Library was established and the first three Archives Officers appointed, one of whom, Mr Allan

Horton, was put in charge and made responsible to the Principal Librarian.<sup>21</sup>

Although the Queensland Libraries Act of 1943 made provision for the management of the State's public records, the relevant part was not proclaimed until July 1958 and it was not until November 1959 that Mr Sharman, for the past ten years State Archivist of Tasmania, became the first State Archivist of Queensland.<sup>22</sup>

The Commonwealth and State Governments were not however the only organisations at this time to employ this comparatively new and emerging class of professionals; the University of Sydney, the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia had each appointed archivists in 1954;<sup>23</sup> the Bank of N.S.W., in 1955;<sup>24</sup> the Australian National University (which had formally established its archives in 1956) appointed its first archivist in 1958;<sup>25</sup> the University of New England in 1959;<sup>26</sup> the University of Melbourne in 1960;<sup>27</sup> and the University of Tasmania in 1963.<sup>28</sup>

Contemporaneously with these vigorous developments of the 1950s came the formation of the Business Archives Council of Australia (N.S.W. Branch) in 1954, followed by the foundation of a Victorian Division in 1957, the same year in which a Summer School in Archives Management was sponsored jointly by the University of Sydney and the Council.

Since they all shared the common pursuit of preserving and keeping the record of the past, there must have been little else that distinguished these early Australian archivists from their professional colleagues in the libraries where most of them were employed, or to mark them off as members of a distinctive and specialised branch of the service to which they belonged—apart that is, from their methods and the materials they worked with. To the undiscerning observer, they might in all other respects have been totally indistinguishable from their librarian colleagues. This was in no small part attributable to the perpetuation of a commonly-held conviction that the most appropriate form of education and training for the archivist was that of librarianship.

When R. M. Crawford, Professor of History at the University of Melbourne since 1937, furnished his report on the Tasmanian Historical Records to the Tasmanian Government in 1940, he recommended,

That in conjunction with the fuller survey of the position, a Tasmanian Archivist should begin training in order to undertake eventually what must be the work of an expert over a long term of years, i.e. the classification, cataloguing and maintenance of the records. I should stress again the special training necessary for such work. I should give my own opinion that you need for the ultimate position of a permanent archivist a person with a university degree in history who has also received a library training.<sup>29</sup>

While it reflected a general trend of archival thought all too prevalent at the time, it was by no means pardonable for a professor of History to give it his *imprimatur*. Charles Johnson's commendable though brief work, *The Care of Documents and Management of Archives*—as reliable a guide to archival methods of management as one could wish for—had been available since 1919,<sup>30</sup> and Jenkinson's *Manual*<sup>31</sup> followed soon after in 1922 with a second edition in 1937.

An English translation of the *Manual* of Muller, Feith and Fruin had appeared in 1940. After all, when Ian Maclean and Alex Lodewyckx met together in late 1944 over a group of archives rescued from war-damaged Port Moresby they 'solemnly decided, and so reported, that the principles and practices laid down in Jenkinson's *Manual* should be used to accession, and later to arrange and describe the Commonwealth archives'.<sup>32</sup>

Not all, however, in 1940 were undiscerning, for in a paper read before the third annual conference of the Australian Institute of Librarians in Adelaide in June of that year, Harold White, then Assistant Librarian of the Commonwealth National Library, exhibited rare insight when he acknowledged, though avoiding labouing, the commonplace assumption of a close relationship between archive and library techniques. The discovery of the relation between the techniques, he declared, 'is as valuable for the warning it gives as for the possibilities it offers for utilising existing library training agencies'.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, he conceded, archivists had something to learn from library techniques, and the experiment in the application of library cataloguing to archives which Mr John Russell was conducting at the National Archives would be watched with interest.<sup>34</sup> Though he acknowledged that some sceptics doubted the wisdom of associating archival institutions and libraries and museums under the one administrative or ministerial control (with a consequent harmful effect in identifying archival science too closely with library science, just as it had been identified with historical science), yet he believed that there were sufficient successful examples of this relationship, particularly in the United States, 'to encourage those in Australia who may doubt the capacity of librarians to administer archives'.<sup>35</sup>

If the more enlightened administrators and librarians gave evidence of some appreciation of the already well laid-down rules of archive management, the same is not so clearly evident in the case of some of the custodians of archives. George Pitt, Archivist of the Public Library of South Australia, at the same conference advanced as a cogent reason for placing archives under library authorities that an archives can only respond readily to every reasonable demand if its papers have been catalogued, and to some extent indexed, by expert hands so that they can be produced promptly when their moment of usefulness arrives:

These processes of course demand considerable professional knowledge and they will not be performed efficiently by an untrained man. I do not wish to imply that archives technique is the same as that employed in a library, but I do say that a knowledge of library processes is an essential prerequisite for the training of an archivist. If the archivist is a trained librarian, he will not only be able to introduce order into what would otherwise be a chaos of papers, but he will inevitably pick up an immense amount of historical information during the course of his duties. But if, on the other hand, the archivist is simply a historical student—let us say a man with an honours history degree with one or two historical works to his credit—he will be quite incapable of creating the complicated mechanism necessary for the smooth working of an archives. I hope the Institute will do all it can to ensure the appointment of trained men to archival positions, and I say this, not in the interest of the librarians, but in the interest of archives work in Australia. If our archivists are historical students, so much the better, but it is absolutely essential that they should first of all be trained men.<sup>36</sup>

We would not of course deny that but for the intervention of libraries our archival resources would certainly have been greatly depleted, and we ought to be eternally grateful for the role they have fulfilled in this regard.<sup>37</sup> Yet the education and training of archivists, as poor relations of the librarians, suffered at worst from complete neglect, and at best from the commendable but nevertheless inadequate and *ad hoc* methods that could be improvised within the general framework of in-service and library training courses, and of visits to related institutions.

Presumably in the absence of any more formal arrangements, when Lodewyckx and Maclean were appointed to the War Memorial and Commonwealth National Library respectively in 1944, each

Made a preliminary study of his work, special advantage being taken of the help of the State Libraries in South Australia and Victoria, and of the National Library in Canberra. These officers then made contact with the departments and began preliminary surveys in order to ascertain the size and urgency of the task.<sup>38</sup>

The War Archives Committee (of which C. E. W. Bean was Chairman) had earlier expressed the opinion in its report of 20 February 1943 that the carrying out of its proposals would necessitate the appointment of an archives officer attached to the staff of the National Library who should be 'a man trained in research either in social science or history'.<sup>39</sup> This was an opinion reiterated some years later by Sir Harold White when he declared that,

Apart from the techniques which he employs, the archivist must be able to evaluate and interpret his special field of records from the background of a sound knowledge and deep interest in all aspects of his national history. He should be recruited with a university degree in the social sciences, preferably at honours standard, and, if possible, with some postgraduate experience.<sup>40</sup>

The Archives Division of the National Library already had a professional staff of nine such archivists when White wrote that in 1956.

In the year after the Archives Branch of the Public Library of Western Australia opened, the Archivist, Miss Mollie Lukis, was sent (in 1946) to the Archives Department of the Public Library of South Australia, according to Gerald Fischer,<sup>41</sup> to study some of its processes and controls which no doubt with modifications were later incorporated in the development of what is now the Battye Library of Western Australian History and State Archives.

When Miss R. M. McGowan was appointed to succeed Mr D.W. Baker as archivist in the Public Library of Victoria in June 1949, she soon after, in October of that year, spent two weeks at the Mitchell Library in Sydney studying the methods and practices in use there. She then submitted a detailed report upon her observations and this together with her recommendations, according to the Chief Librarian's report for 1950-51, made 'a valuable contribution to the long term planning of the work of our own Archives Section'.<sup>42</sup>

The Tasmanian Library Board reported, in 1950-51, that its recently appointed archivist (Mr Robert Sharman) was 'given training in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and has now taken up duty in Hobart'.<sup>43</sup>



Following the Government's approval given in 1954-55 for the appointment of three additional archivists to the Archives Section of the Public Library of Victoria, Mr Harry Nunn, B.A. was appointed Senior Archivist in November 1955, and three other officers were engaged shortly thereafter. In December 1955 Mr Nunn was authorised to visit and examine the National Archives in Canberra and the New South Wales Archives in Sydney.<sup>44</sup>

By this stage however, there had commenced a modest, but nevertheless formal, course of certification which in retrospect must be seen as a significant, if small concession to the demands of the archival profession now beginning to make its presence felt upon the Library Association of Australia. A paper on the subject of *Archives, with Special Reference to Australia* was incorporated in the syllabus of the Registration Examination of the Library Association of Australia in 1950. This, over the next decade, probably served more effectively as an object of criticism for archival reformers than as a realistic proposition for the training of archivists.<sup>45</sup>

By 1959 a committee of the Archives Section of the Library Association reported, in response to a request from the Association's Council,<sup>46</sup> that

In Australia the only qualification that an archivist can gain is to pass the L.A.A. Archive Paper R.9. This could only be called a preliminary examination in archives. The only archives which require it as a basic qualification are South Australia and possibly Queensland. The National Library does not require any library qualifications, nor does Victoria. The other states require their archivists to hold the Registration and a suitable degree.<sup>47</sup>

The Committee concluded in its report that

There are two separate professions, archivist and librarian, and that the Association should recognise this fact, particularly in its examinations. Initially this could be done by making the Examination Regulations less rigid.<sup>48</sup>

It also believed that many archivists had no interest in joining the Association and doubted whether they would ever join an association of librarians because they believed, *inter alia*, that library qualifications were a decided disadvantage to the archivist.<sup>49</sup>

After much protracted discussion, in April 1962, the Board of Examinations of the Library Association introduced two additional archive papers to the syllabus of its Registration Examination. For the first time in Australia, as an American archival observer noted,

An attempt was made to minimise the amount of study necessary for archivists in fields not relevant to the archivist's needs. With the approval of the new Registration Certificate in Archives by the General Council of the Library Association of Australia, the Association became the recognised examining and professional body for archivists in Australia as it is for librarians.<sup>50</sup>

This premature optimism was not shared by all Australian archivists, some of whom were still not placated by these generous concessions of the Library Association. In an address to the Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Association held in Hobart in August 1963, Russell Doust and Gordon Richardson (then Senior Archivist and Principal Archivist of the Archives Authority of N.S.W.) took the

opportunity to look at the Association's examination requirements in training for archivists.

We do not suggest that some training in librarianship is any handicap to an archivist; on the contrary he is the better for it if only because of the use that he must make of libraries. A similar argument which might be developed in respect of librarians is not our concern here. It is, however, highly questionable, whether the amount of librarianship now in the syllabus for the Registration Certificate in Archives is either necessary or even desirable, unless there are to be opportunities for a career common both to archivists and to librarians, which there may well continue to be in the rather special circumstances of the Public Service in New South Wales. This we believe to be desirable, and we would hope to see an increasing number of people with dual qualifications not only in New South Wales but elsewhere. But if the object is simply to provide a qualification suitable for archivists then clearly the archival content of the present Registration Certificate in Archives is far too low. Good Librarians have become good archivists, and no doubt there is room for a two-way traffic, but we do not see that the training of an archivist should provide for a contingency that may never come to pass.<sup>51</sup>

While they had some reservations about the balance as between the three archives papers, they thought it not quite fair to be hypercritical of

What is such a new development in this country while we proclaim our belief that the provision of a basic professional qualification for archivists is a highly significant advance, and that the introduction of university teaching in archives is likely to prove of even greater significance.<sup>52</sup>

This last was a reference to the new thirty-hour course in Archives and Official Publications offered for the first time in 1963 as an optional subject in the Diploma of Librarianship which itself had been offered by the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales since 1960.

The Registration Certificate in Archives understandably continues to be a controversial issue amongst archivists; one critical observer thought as recently as 1971 that, although tinkering with details may do something to ameliorate the lot of those who try to teach archives, an acceptable standard of professional education will not be achieved until certain fundamental facts of the profession are recognised.<sup>53</sup> I do not, however, share his pessimism when he says that 'Archivists are a very small profession, and it is unlikely that they will ever support an independent system of professional training in this country'.<sup>54</sup>

The status quo remained little altered throughout the 1960s with the optional subject in Archives as part of the Diploma in Librarianship continuing to be offered spasmodically as the demand for it fluctuated from year to year. Gerald Fischer commented in 1969, insofar as the experience of South Australia was concerned, that archives work was at least until 1958 'seen as a specialised branch of library work', though not all officers employed in the Archives Department had received library training, and until the 1960s 'only one possessed a university degree when she joined the staff'.<sup>55</sup> Obviously, he concluded, an external syllabus such as the Registration Certificate in Archives could not cover local peculiarities of work, especially reference work, so much training still had to be acquired on the job. 'In this respect', he said, 'plain commonsense remains an important aspect of any officer's qualifications'.<sup>56</sup>

If, as one commentator in 1965 believed, one of the criteria for the recognition of a profession was the existence of a generally recognised system, controlled by the profession, for certifying the possession of a body of knowledge, then he was not prepared to accept the Registration Certificate in Archives as a suitable test of qualification:

The examination is in fact created specifically to suit those institutions in which archivists are under the control of librarians. It has some value in providing a means by which librarians can be given some knowledge of the problems which confront the archivist. It also gives archivists in these institutions opportunities for wider promotions but at the same time it does positive harm in perpetuating the dangerous fallacy of free interchangeability of staff between archives and libraries. On the whole, therefore, it is my belief that we have no acceptable system for professional certification and I am quite sure that this belief is shared not only by all professional workers outside the State libraries, but by some of those within its walls.<sup>57</sup>

With rare optimism, this observer concluded in 1965 that 'the leaders of the library profession are at last convinced, I think, that the techniques and principles of archives work are substantially different from those of library work'.<sup>58</sup>

If that were true of the professional librarians, there is less reason to think that the academic historians appreciated the point. When Professor Frank Crowley of the University of New South Wales addressed the archivists assembled at the biennial conference of the Library Association of Australia in August 1967, he echoed the firmly-held conviction of Professor Crawford that basic training in librarianship is essential for all apprentice archivists'.<sup>59</sup>

Professor Crowley was, nevertheless, active in the movement for establishment of a postgraduate course of professional training for archivists in Australia and it was he, along with Professor Wilma Radford, Head of the School of Librarianship, who must be accredited with responsibility for taking the steps which eventually culminated in the inauguration of the Diploma in Archives Administration course within the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales in 1973.

Of the total of six subjects which are required to be taken over one year full time in the Diploma in Archives Administration course, three (comprising a total of eight session hours out of a total of thirty) comprise subjects which are, and have been for some years, offered as components of the Diploma of Librarianship without significant modification.

The prospectus initially issued in connection with the course at its commencement announced that it was

Designed to provide education in the principles and methods of the administration of archives and allied materials, including current records and collections of manuscripts.<sup>60</sup>

However, it further explained that

As knowledge of some aspects of librarianship is essential for the archivist, some of the subjects of the Diploma of Librarianship course are included in the proposed new course . . . and deal with reference service and materials, including government publications and subject bibliography. Libraries and library methods studied from the point of view of the archivist form a segment of a proposed new subject.<sup>61</sup>

Thus one may have cause to speculate, as Doust and Richardson did in 1963, as to whether the motivation in designing such a course (apart from administrative or financial expedience at the time) might not also have been to 'provide for a contingency that may never come to pass'. Admission to the course is subject to the condition introduced also in 1973 that

Candidates must hold a degree from the University of New South Wales or any other approved university. Candidates who have not studied Australian history and politics may be required to take a qualifying or concurrent programme approved by the Board of Professional Studies.<sup>62</sup>

Consequent upon a visit to the School of Librarianship of an accreditation panel late in 1973, the University was informed by the Library Association of Australia in October 1974 that the Standing Committee of the L.A.A. had resolved to accept the Diploma in Archives Administration as meeting the examination requirements for Associateship of the Library Association of Australia.

It is not difficult to see why the present course was so designed. It reflects conspicuous evidence of the influence of the earlier library-oriented thinking which was clearly based on the assumptions that mobility between the two professions of archives administration and librarianship should be adequately recognised in such a course, and that there were certain core and specialised elements in the field of librarianship which required no adaption or modification in considering their relevance to the archivist. The consequence has been to compress the purely archival content of the course out of proportion to the relevance and value of the library content, which only a radical revision of the present syllabus and course structure would rectify. I believe, therefore, that the existence of an Australian Society of Archivists would, in the future, provide a better guarantee that the interest and opinions of the professional body of archivists in this country would be more adequately represented and reflected should the opportunity for such a revision present itself.

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Having dealt at some length with some of the fundamental assumptions which have influenced the professional education and training of archivists in the past in Australia, I turn now to a brief consideration of those basic assumptions which seem to me to be necessary to take into account in the planning of any course designed for the professional education and training of the modern Australian archivist. If, in doing so, I allude much to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, it is because I believe, as Roger Ellis did, that Jenkinson's *Manual* 'is, and must remain, a major landmark in the history of archive science'; that 'the statements of principle contained in the *Manual* have remained valid'; and that Jenkinson's 'exposition of the concept of Custody and of the duties of the Archivist, have remained fundamental to archive thought in the English speaking countries'.<sup>63</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 1: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should aim to foster and inculcate a deep conviction that the primary and inescapable*

*responsibility of the archivist is towards his archives.*

It does seem a matter of great importance to me that we should constantly seek to remind ourselves of Jenkinson's dictum that the duties of the archivist are *primary* and *secondary*.

In the first place he has to take all possible precautions for the safeguarding of his Archives and for their Custody, which is the safeguarding of their essential qualities. *Subject to the discharge of these duties* he has in the second place to provide to the best of his ability for the needs of historians and other research workers. *But the position of primary and secondary must not be reversed.*<sup>64</sup>

The Archivist, Jenkinson wrote elsewhere,<sup>65</sup> is the servant of his archives first and afterwards of the student public.

Roger Ellis, in his Presidential Address to the Society of Archivists in 1966, declared that

First of all we must identify the common denominator of all archivists, and make that the foundation-stone of our training; and I have no hesitation in naming this as *preservation*. That, to my mind, is the basic task of everyone employed in a record office, and that is the first duty in which an archivist should be trained. You must, of course, tell him what archives, in their essence, are, and what is the meaning of the appellation "Archivist" to which he aspires; but that pious and fundamental duty being performed, he must learn without delay or distraction how to preserve, protect and care for the objects which lie, or will lie, upon his shelves.<sup>66</sup>

I am not unconscious of the fact that conflicts of interest and responsibility will inevitably arise: Philip Brooks has noted that

Successful co-operation depends upon an understanding of the basic responsibilities of the archivist for the protection and the integrity of his holdings, duties that may sometimes seem to conflict with his responsibility to aid researchers.<sup>67</sup>

I believe it a matter of the first importance that a course of professional education for the archivist should aim to foster such an appreciation of his role and functions as will enable him to establish for himself the correct order of priorities amongst his duties.

*ASSUMPTION 2: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should be based upon a substantial and thorough knowledge of the theoretical concepts and principles underlying the practice of the profession.*

An intelligent and enlightened approach to all of the tasks that the archivist may be called upon to perform can only properly be fostered by imparting a thorough knowledge of the theoretical concepts and principles upon which the archivist bases his techniques and skills. These concepts and principles cannot be adequately comprehended at second hand. They must be studied at source, and properly understood. At present in Australia for students of archive administration, the history of the development of archival concepts and principles is inadequately documented.

Yet it is important, for a very sound reason, that the archivist should make a special study of, and become thoroughly familiar with, the historical and theoretical foundations of the concepts and principles

governing the management and control of archives. The evolution of those concepts and principles is by no means complete. Indeed, the very foundations of them have for many years been questioned, and their universal acceptance by the archive profession throughout the world is far from settled. They have in at least one important respect been re-examined by an Australian archivist who has undoubtedly made an original contribution to the debate on the validity and applicability of those concepts and principles.<sup>68</sup> A knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts and principles underlying archival problems is a prerequisite to discovering the solutions to them.

For another and no less important reason which Dr W. Kaye Lamb has proposed, such an assumption deserves the fullest consideration in the planning of a course of professional education for archivists. There is, as Dr Lamb has stated, one essential preliminary to such a course: we must agree upon the principles and the standards that will be learned in the one place and applied in the other.

We must develop archival standards and basic principles that are widely accepted. Distinctive standards and principles are the basis of a profession; it must be recognised as having the stewardship of the expertise in an acknowledged field of endeavour.<sup>69</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 3: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should aim to foster a sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge of archival methods and techniques as will enable the archivist to apply or adapt the skills and techniques thus acquired in any archival environment.*

The professional education of archivists can most effectively and economically be accomplished through an educational and training programme conducted independently of the archive institution. An in-service training course conducted by an archive (or library) institution, while a valuable supplementary method of inducting new recruits to the service, is inadequate if conducted on a part-time basis, and costly in terms of staff time involved if conducted on a full-time basis.

A postgraduate course in a tertiary institution, closely integrated with directed practical training in an approved archival institution, provides an appropriate educational programme. It can better facilitate the development of a broader and more flexible approach to the problems and methods of modern archives and records management than could a course within the more rigid and limited environment of a single archive institution.

It can provide for the systematic study of theory and a free interchange of ideas and views concerning archival methodology, which must ultimately foster, in the professional archivist, an enlightened and more critical approach to the tasks which he performs, and the development of initiative and resourcefulness in resolving the problems encountered in the performance of his work, based essentially on his practical training and technical knowledge acquired against a far broader background than he might otherwise gain in a single archive institution.

*ASSUMPTION 4: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should aim to facilitate the study of basic theoretical concepts and principles underlying the methodology of archives work, closely and substantially integrated with practical training within archive institutions.*

A close association between the teaching and the archive institution is vitally necessary to provide the raw materials to study. There are many aspects of the archivist's work, Dr Lamb has stated, that can only be learned effectively on the job. Sorting records and papers, appraising them, servicing them—these cannot be mastered by theoretical study; they cannot be learned by sampling as can be done with many of the techniques of library work; they can only be performed with knowledge and judgement by an archivist who has had considerable practical experience.

No one can become an archivist just by frequenting a classroom; professional training must be associated with and based firmly upon practical experience.<sup>70</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 5: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should aim to foster an understanding and an appreciation of the continuity of the relationship between archives and records management, and of the indispensability of a close relationship between records management and the administration of modern archives.*

Records and paperwork management techniques are not simply management tools for the modern administrator by which he may effect economies and achieve greater efficiency in his management operations. Such techniques provide for the archivist the best guarantee of the preservation of his archives of the future. In an opinion expressed by Dr Lamb in 1962, when President of the Society of Archivists, circumstances seemed to be making the archivist to an ever increasing degree the person who in many instances will decide what source material will be preserved and what will be discarded; and in this way he promises to influence very fundamentally the history that can be written in the future.<sup>71</sup> To Dr Lamb, this was clearly a development of the first importance, the full significance of which he believed many archivists had not begun to appreciate.

Someone must deal with record problems. If the archivist does not take the lead in doing so, someone else must and will. And once authority over records has passed into other hands, the archivist will find it extremely difficult to ensure that material of interest to him is not destroyed. Records management, viewed in isolation, may seem to be a barren thing from the point of view of history; but a records programme should have two purposes, not just one. From the point of view of the Treasury and Ministry of Works, its purpose is to get rid of as many records as possible as promptly as possible, but from the point of view of the government and country as a whole it should have a highly important second purpose—the identification and preservation of documents of long-term usefulness and historical importance. The only way to make certain that this second purpose is not neglected is to have the disposal of records subject to the supervision and approval of the archivist; and if he is to have this authority,

the archivist must be prepared to concern himself with both aspects of records disposal, and not just the one that is of primary interest to him.<sup>72</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 6: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should be based on the assumption that the archivist—perhaps in consultation, but ultimately the archivist alone—is best qualified by his training and experience to be the arbiter in the selection of records for the future.*

The evaluation of records for disposition was considered by Doust and Richardson<sup>73</sup> to be the element of the archivist's work which presented the greatest difficulty and called for the highest qualities in practice. They believed that because of the difficulty of establishing standards or criteria of general application for preservation or destruction, theory alone did not seem to be adequate here; in making what amounted to an informed or inspired guess about potential archival values for the future, the archivist required a knowledge of the contents of a series and of its relation to other series and to the information recorded in them. This technique, they acknowledged, was also difficult to teach to others, which led them to conclude that the training of an archivist cannot be carried out independently of archives.

This important role of the archivist deserves to be adequately recognised and appropriately emphasised in any educational programme. It is, I believe, the keystone of the archivist's craft. Dr Lamb, with his usual clarity, has expressed it as his opinion that the function of appraisal is one of the vital and inescapable elements in the work of the archivist—he must, as part of his routine duties, give life and death decisions determining whether papers shall survive or whether they shall disappear. If he makes a wrong judgement the verdict cannot be recalled; the papers in question will have vanished forever.<sup>74</sup>

The most basic change in the position of the modern archivist, he declared,

Is that most modern archivists must be prepared to pass judgement on records, including the sentence of life or death; they must be ready to pick and choose the items that should be kept, and to decide which items may be destroyed, without serious historical loss.

This is a grave responsibility—indeed, rather a frightening one—but we must face it and discharge it to the best of our ability. The old archivist, as we have seen, could dodge it in great part by the simple expedient of retaining everything. We, on the contrary must pick and choose, knowing that the decision we make, will in a measure—and frequently to a very great measure—shape history, since they will determine what documents will survive to provide source materials for historians in the years to come.

Here then is our modern archivist, not just a custodian; not just a receiver of whatever papers someone may choose to give him, but someone who has a voice in deciding what records are to be retained, and a person who can go far to decide what sources will be available to historians in the future.<sup>75</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 7: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should, in taking account not only of the enormous increase in the quantity, but also of the variety of the records to be considered by the archivist, allow for the diversification or*



*specialisation which results from the new and varied content of the records with which we must, as a profession, be concerned.*

Roger Ellis foresaw in 1966<sup>76</sup> the necessity of acknowledging that, while the training in the *care* of archives may, and indeed must, be common to all archivists, when we come to a *knowledge of their contents* we must accept and provide for specialisation upon a scale not yet attempted. He then believed

That if the 'modern archivist' . . . is to know as much about company law, local government, and records management as his 'classical' counterpart knows of mediaeval chronology and the State Paper Office, we shall have to accept in this 'modern' field much more specialised instruction than we have hitherto known; partly because no one course could deal fully and simultaneously with (for example) the records both of business and of science and technology, with records management thrown in, and equally because we shall have to rely upon specialist instructors . . .<sup>77</sup>

Yet Ellis was really only echoing the words of Dr Lamb, who, in his Presidential Address to the Society of American Archivists in the previous year, had suggested

That we must recognise that the profession of archivist has now become so broad and varied that no one person can any longer claim to have a detailed knowledge of all its aspects. The competent records man has an expertise that the archivist, whose work is concerned chiefly with a manuscript collection will not have. Conversely, the archivist will have his own expertise, and in particular, he will have to have an appreciation of long-term values that the records manager need not possess. Other specialised segments of our profession will certainly arise in the future, as collections grow, and the materials which they contain become more varied in character, as they undoubtedly will.<sup>78</sup>

Whilst traditionally we in Australia have been accustomed to consider, like Schellenberg, that 'the best preliminary training that an archivist can have . . . is advanced training in history',<sup>79</sup> and whilst no one would seriously doubt its value for archival work, I do question the long-held assumption that a substantial or major background knowledge of history should be the *only* or even the *main* prerequisite to entering a course of professional training in archives administration, and ultimately of performing work with archives.

*ASSUMPTION 8: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should endeavour to foster the broadest possible view of the archivist's role; should reflect the fact that the archivist is no longer primarily a custodian—a caretaker—but that his role should also include the extension or projection of his archives to create a 'public consciousness' of their existence and importance.*

Roger Ellis, again in his Presidential Address to the Society of Archivists in 1965, expressed the idea succinctly as follows:

In [the] education of the general reader we archivists have an active part to play . . . we must take a lead and get our public to follow. We have not only a function but a mission. We must find and keep in touch with our public of potential readers of history talking to the school-children, lecturing to societies, arranging our exhibitions, writing to the local press, making our appearances at and our contributions to every occasion and

anniversary, civic, ecclesiastical and academic. None of this is unfamiliar; I just wish to emphasise what I believe to be the right true end of such activities. I am thinking of them, not simply as 'public relations' or empire building or thunder stealing, but as a means towards accomplishing one of our major tasks—namely, first to arouse and then to satisfy an informed interest in documents far beyond the limits of any academic circle; to make of the country's archives something which everyone accepts and knows about as a matter of course; and so to build up and maintain an informed and critical reading public, which will, in turn, both nourish the study of history and maintain its standards.<sup>80</sup>

In short, I believe the modern Australian archivist should be trained to accept as a natural and essential element in his role the full and effective exploitation of the potential of his archives by demonstrating their relevance to modern society: by the creation, if you like, of an 'archive consciousness' in the society he serves.

*ASSUMPTION 9: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should reflect adequate recognition of the importance which deserves to be attached to 'administrative history' as 'a key to the arrangement and comprehension of archives'.<sup>81</sup>*

Ian Maclean gave it firmly as his opinion in 1959 that if there must be some basic professional knowledge that is particularly the province of the archivist, this is surely the study of the characteristics of record materials, the comparative study of past and present record-keeping systems, and the classification problems associated with them.<sup>82</sup> To the rhetorical question—'How should the archivist be trained?'—he replied

That to be an archivist in the broadest sense of the word he should be recruited with a background that will be most useful to him for the period with which he will be concerned—and that thereafter his professional training should consist of comparative theory and practice of record-keeping and special studies of the systems most applicable in his periods.<sup>83</sup>

I am not entirely convinced, however, that the same end cannot be achieved by the study of administrative history of any administration and any institution, and of archives of all grades and periods. Sir Hilary Jenkinson, if I may quote from him again, succinctly captured the essential point when he emphasised the educational value of a close study of all the more authoritative and definitive works which have appeared on administrative history 'without any consideration of whether the Student's own work is likely to be concerned with the particular period, institution, or type of Document with which they deal'.

The reason for this is that there is a certain angle of approach to Archives, a point of view, which our Student has not merely to accept as a maxim enunciated in lectures but to apprehend and make his own in a fashion that can only be achieved by familiarity with the experiences of others *in consimili casu*. He will find that these experiences bring him back always to the same point—the relation of Archives to each other and to the office machinery which produced them.<sup>84</sup>

On the singular occasion when Jenkinson allowed that the archivist may turn historian, it was in this branch of what he called the 'historical services' that he might most properly enlist.

His results will have a twofold value: for elucidation of the Administrative History which lies behind a series of Records previously unworked not only adds to the stock of known facts but provides a piece of indispensable equipment for the researches of others who, in whatever interest, may desire later to exploit the same documents.<sup>85</sup>

*ASSUMPTION 10: A course designed for the professional education of archivists should endeavour to foster a deep conviction of the important nature of the work they perform.*

The time must come very soon, Professor Frank Crowley said in 1967, when archivists are as well trained at their business as historians are at theirs.<sup>86</sup> And Philip Brooks has stated that 'a competent archivist is to be looked upon as a scholarly colleague of the researcher, far more than solely a preserver and a caretaker'.<sup>87</sup> If we wish to be respected as a profession; if we wish to be looked upon by the professional historians as joint colleagues in a scholarly venture, then I believe we must be thoroughly apprised and convinced of the importance of our mission. The archivist's career, Jenkinson said,

Is one of service. He exists in order to make other people's work possible, unknown people for the most part and working very possibly on lines equally unknown to him; some of them perhaps in the quite distant future and upon lines as yet unpredictable.<sup>88</sup>

The good archivist, he proclaimed, is perhaps the most selfless devotee of Truth the modern world produces.<sup>89</sup> Archivists, said Schellenberg, 'are the guardians of the truth, or at least, of the evidence on the basis of which truth can be established'.<sup>90</sup> We ought frequently to remind ourselves, therefore, of the memorable words of Roger Ellis:

The facts are in our keeping. The whole aim of an archivist's work is to preserve and present them. Without the historian's 'imagination and art' these facts can remain, as we all know, a valley of dry bones; but without the archivist's 'science and research' the historian will not know either what the facts are or where they are to be found.<sup>91</sup>

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