

## NEWS NOTES

### **Australian National University Archives**

Because of the Archives Officer's remissness no news was sent to the Editor for the last issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* so the reportage here will extend a little beyond that point. Mrs *Margaret Lawrence*, B.A., Dip.Arch.Adm., was forced by temporary ill health to resign her position, and her post has been filled by Miss *Maureen Purtell*, B.A., Dip.Arch.Adm. Miss Purtell's arrival in March coincided with the resignation of *Doreen Wheeler* who, after five years as Deputy Archives Officer, received a well-deserved appointment to the position of Archivist with B.H.P. in Melbourne—one of the most significant appointments in many years. At the time of writing (early June) the position of Deputy Archives Officer had been advertised and interviews were being conducted but news of an appointment will have to await the next issue.

Three very significant accessions deserve mention. C.S.R. Ltd. has decided to make the Archives the repository for its records and a large first deposit of the London Head Office records of the Australian Estates Company (which C.S.R. recently acquired) has been made. Finally, owing to the change of domicile of the Australian Agricultural Company from England to Australia, the company is depositing a large quantity of its head office records to complete the magnificent collection held for some years. *Michael Saclier* is visiting England (and may have returned shortly before publication of this issue) and will (if the Editor permits) report in a subsequent issue on what he did and saw there. At the time of writing he can only report that his staff is green with envy.

The terminal linking the Archives to the Joint Schools DEC-10 computer was installed early in the year. Familiarisation exercises to introduce staff to the joys of the computer age have proceeded smoothly (including the process by which *Archives and Manuscripts* and the Society's *Bulletin* are addressed) and the first lists of records recorded and edited by electronic means have been produced.

Prospective publications on which preliminary work has started include a guide to or catalogue of the extensive pamphlet collection which has been built up over the years. Peripheral to the main archival strands of our work, the pamphlet collection is still an extremely valuable (and unfortunately too little known) research resource which should be more widely used.

### **Queensland State Archives**

*Lee McGregor*, Assistant Archivist, is on study leave for 1976 completing an Economics Degree. In her absence, *Barbara Bykersma* is Acting Assistant Archivist. *June Nichols* and *Ruth Kerr* have joined the graduate staff.

The Q.S.A. has purchased an Ademco 3442 Laminating Press, and this is described in the Technical Notes of this issue. Also new is a Beckman H5 pH Meter with 39507 flat end measuring reference electrode.

Significant accessions include general correspondence from the Office of the Governor, from 1922 to 1955.

### **University of Sydney Archives**

In 1975 a special University Committee was formed to direct the preparation of a history of the University of Sydney. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor *B. R. Williams*, is the Chairman, and the other members are Professor *J. M. Ward*; Associate-Professors *C. Turney* and *K. Cable*; *D. R. V. Wood*; and *G. L. Fischer* (Archivist). The Executive Director of the project is Associate-Professor Cable and there is a research unit headed by Dr *Ursula Bygott*. Much of the research is being done in the University Archives but records of the Australian Archives, the Archives Office of New South Wales and the Mitchell Library are being surveyed, and selected past and present members of the staff are being interviewed and in some cases recorded. Publicity about the university project has resulted in the deposit of records in the University Archives especially of student lecture note-books and working papers. These records will have a wide research value, not only for the history project but also for other research into the development of teacher-learning methods employed in University subjects.

The University of Sydney Archives issues each term a small processed publication titled *Record*. Mainly designed for circulation within the University, it lists records received in the University Archives and publishes short articles on some aspects of University history and records. Copies are already sent to the major archival institutions in Australia. Any archives office interested to receive *Record* should write to the University of Sydney, 2006. There is no charge.

Details of the Archives' new Lambrecht thermo-hygrograph can be found amongst the Technical Notes.

### **Mitchell Library Manuscript Section**

Some important accessions to the Manuscript Section of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, include papers of the Archer family, c.1899-1963; they are mainly letter books and financial records of Gracemere Station, Queensland, and subsidiary properties, and they complement those already held by the Mitchell Library. Papers of Sir Jack Cassidy from 1921 to 1974, mainly briefs and annotated speeches (restricted access) were presented by Lady Cassidy. Mr K. G. Johnston, a descendant of Lt.-Col. George Johnston, presented papers of the Johnston family from 1792-1947. They include books from George Johnston's library, letters to his second son Robert, and papers concerning the sale of North Annandale Estate. Amongst items purchased were W. E. Gordon's Journal on board H.M.S. *Virago* 1851-53 to the Pacific Ocean, including Pitcairn Island; and the Rev. Henry Nisbet's papers 1836-76 including correspondence, sermons, lectures and language notes, mainly for the period during which Nisbet served as an L.M.S. missionary in Samoa.

On 24 and 25 June *Paul Brunton* and *David Newell* of the Mitchell Library staff took part in a seminar 'Managing a Small Museum' conducted by the Committee on New South Wales Museums and

Galleries of the Division of Cultural Activities of the Premier's Department. This is the fifth of a series of seminars held in different regions of the State, aimed at those responsible for small museums and their collections, in which Mitchell Library manuscripts and conservation staff have co-operated with officers of other cultural institutions under the Premier's Department.

#### **University of Newcastle Archives**

In February 1975 Mr *Denis Rowe* began duty in the Auchmuty Library, University of Newcastle, as Archives Officer. Since then the University Archives has been collecting for preservation and research the historical records of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley as well as valuable administrative records of the University of Newcastle.

The University of Newcastle began its existence as the Newcastle University College of the University of New South Wales, then known as the New South Wales University of Technology. The University Archives holds a tape recording of the formal opening of the Newcastle College on 3 December 1951. The first students were enrolled in the 1952 academic year. The University of Newcastle, following many years of local public pressure and agitation, became autonomous on 1 January 1965. The University's Auchmuty Library, in which the Archives are housed, is air-conditioned and fireproof. The Archives occupies a separate and distinct part of the library, accessible only to approved members of staff and research students. After its first year of operations, the University Archives can make available some 700 volumes and 200 boxes of research material.

#### **La Trobe Library Manuscripts Collection**

*John Thompson*, the Manuscripts Librarian, is on leave for twelve months until February next year. *Ross Gibbs* is Acting Manuscripts Librarian in his absence.

Major recent accessions include records of the Melbourne Meeting of the Society of Friends 1846-1916; minute books and correspondence of the Rosedale Mechanics' Institute 1863-1967; and several collections of personal papers including that of the children's authoress, Mary Grant Bruce.

#### **University of Tasmania Archives**

The University Archivist Miss *Shirley King* was absent overseas during the early part of this year. She was able to attend the annual conference of the British Society of Archivists held in April. The main discussion was on the question of integrating information between different institutions in related fields, but as the chief problem seemed to be lack of sufficient staff to keep up to date with indexing no startling solutions were found—apart from plenty of 'get-togethers'.

The Archives acquired the papers of W. E. Fuller (1885-1960), bookseller, broadcaster, writer and amateur actor.

#### **State Library of Western Australia**

With some degree of prescience, this journal noted in its last issue in an article paying tribute to the archival career of *Robert Sharman* that more chapters may yet be added; for now Mr Sharman has been

appointed State Librarian with the Library Board of Western Australia. Mr Sharman took up the appointment in early June and so can now claim to have lived and worked in (at least) Hobart, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide and now Perth. He certainly vies with Mr *Ian Maclean* as Australia's Most Travelled Archivist. The State Archives of Western Australia are under the authority of the Library Board.

### **New Zealand**

Interest in the formation of an Archives and Records Association in New Zealand increases. Meetings are being held in various centres and a Steering Committee has been set up to formulate a Constitution. Already a meeting of over fifty people has supported the concept in Wellington. The idea is to have an interest rather than a strictly professional group in a country where there are so few practising archivists. A similar number of people met in Palmerston North with a view to taking action for the better preservation of local body archives in the Manawatu region.

The Seminar on Archives and Manuscripts held in September 1975, for which there were fifty-one registrations, proved very successful. A further, shorter seminar which will specialize on finding-aids is to be held later this year we hope.

It has been a busy time for **National Archives**, culminating in Stage One of the move to new accommodation in Vivian Street. By the end of the year the move will have been completed and all the archivists and most of the archives will be together under the one roof in a total of nearly 28,250 square feet. Unfortunately the new premises are not so well situated as the old, but the relative spaciousness and other advantages make up for a great deal. Stage One involved the transfer of over 14,000 linear feet of archives from four different places. Considerable staff time was saved by engagement of a firm to undertake the bulk of the physical labour, however much careful planning was required. Service was disrupted to a minimum and there was no need to close down. Unfortunately the University vacations with a consequent influx of readers coincided with the activity and did cause some difficulties.

*Richard Hill*, M.A. and *Peter Miller*, B.A., Diploma in Archives Administration (University of New South Wales) have joined the National Archives staff. *Tom Reynolds* has proceeded on leave overseas.

Notable accessions have been papers of out-going Ministers and Cabinet records, of which the first consignment has now been accessioned.

The question of access is still of concern. Access to the greater part of the archives of the Department of Maori Affairs has now been opened. Further departmental archives may be cleared in the near future.

The Senior Archivist, *Rosemary Collier*, has been exploring the feasibility of manufacture of acid-free paper. The potential use is much greater than expected. The recycling of paper from files approved for destruction has also been investigated. Film archives and use of archives in schools are receiving consideration.

Canterbury's regional archives committee has commenced

publication of a Canterbury Archives Bulletin reporting progress in that region.

*Gary Clover*, M.A., Diploma N.Z. Library School, has succeeded *Jennifer Bound* as archivist at the **Canterbury Public Library** and has embarked on arranging the archives there. Accessions include a quantity of local body records from the Paparua County Council.

Notable accessions to the archives of the **Nelson Provincial Museum** have been papers of the Dun Mountain Copper Mining Company Limited 1858-66. At the **Auckland Institute and Museum** they include the Journal of the Rev. V. Lush, 1850-82 and J. D. McComish, Papers re the botany of Norfolk and Lord Howe Island.

At the **Hocken Library**, Dunedin, *Michael Hannah*, B.A.(Hons.), has been appointed Assistant Archivist. Prior to Mr Hannah's appointment, with part-time assistance, the papers of J. T. Paul had been arranged and listed. Paul, a journalist and Legislative Councillor, was prominent in trade union affairs. Sir Peter Buck's field notebooks on Maori life and custom, 1907-26 have been accessioned. Also worth mentioning are Cameron family papers including Union Steamship Company ships' plans, specifications and correspondence dating from the 1860s up till 1909.

At the **Alexander Turnbull Library** papers of members of parliament and records of Corso (1944-70) feature amongst accessions. The War Document project of the Alexander Turnbull Library and National Archives continues to flourish.

Work for a Union Catalogue of archives and manuscripts has progressed well. The Catalogue, the Canterbury Archives Council, and an examination of the Seminar on archives and manuscripts all featured in the day's programme for an Archives Seminar during the Annual New Zealand Library Association Conference.

### **Australian Archives**

Australian Archives had nothing of major import to record beyond the completion of its new Darwin building, described elsewhere in this issue. Its most recent statement on access to its holdings, though, may be of interest to readers.

#### *Access to Australian Government Records*

In general, records of the Australian Government are open for public study at the end of a period of thirty years beginning on 1 January in the year after that in which the records were created. To allow study of the Second World War period as a whole, records originating up to the end of 1945 were however given accelerated release.

The Government has directed that the thirty year access rule should apply also to Cabinet papers, which are distinct from departmental records; and, because of their special interest, wartime Cabinet papers to the end of 1945 were similarly released for public examination in advance of the thirty year period.

The following categories of records are not normally released for public access:

1. Documents containing information about individuals, the disclosure

- of which would cause distress or embarrassment to living persons or their immediate descendants.
2. Documents revealing confidential sources of restricted intelligence, e.g. in the defence, political, or economic areas.
  3. Documents containing information supplied in confidence, the disclosure of which would or might constitute a breach of good faith.
  4. Documents which identify weaknesses in Commonwealth legislation still in force or in the Commonwealth's title to territory, land, or property.
  5. Documents in relation to which a specific request in Parliament for release or tabling has been refused.
  6. Exceptionally sensitive papers, the disclosure of which would be contrary to the public interest on security or other grounds (including the need to safeguard the revenue).

Before their release on open access to members of the public, departmental records are examined in order that those which fall into these categories may be identified. Cabinet papers undergo a similar examination. Many of the more commonly used records have already been through this process, and there is thus no delay between a request for such records and their availability in the Search Rooms of the Australian Archives. In the case of other records, however, the procedure may necessitate a delay which may vary from a matter of days up to a month.

Access to both departmental records and to Cabinet papers is arranged through the Australian Archives, which has its headquarters in Canberra and regional offices in all State capitals, Darwin and Townsville. All requests for access to records of the Australian Government should therefore be directed to the office of the Australian Archives in Canberra or in the region where the relevant records are likely to be held.

On request, Australian Archives staff will advise researchers of the category of restriction applying to a particular document, and of conditions under which access to documents in that category would normally be reviewed with a view to allowing special access in particular cases. Requests for a review of access decisions may be directed to Archives staff, together with an indication of why the particular document is required. Such a review involves consultation at various levels, and there could be some consequent delay.

Certain types of records are not subject to the same conditions of access as the generality of records of the Australian Government. These include shared documents (documents created jointly by the Australian Government and one or more other organizations), records of the judiciary, records of the legislature, vice-regal records, and records deposited by individuals and bodies not regarded as being subject to the established Cabinet directions on access. The access status of such records will be made known on request.

Members of the public wishing to use records should apply for a Search Ticket allowing them entry to all Search Rooms of the Australian Archives, and they should also complete a form of Application for Access. They may then have immediate access to records already

cleared, and records which are not already available will then be programmed for clearance as soon as possible.

### **Public Record Office, Victoria**

The only official news is that seven additional staff positions have been created. But the following can also be reported. *Ian Maclean* resigned as Deputy Keeper and took up the post of Principal Archivist with the Archives Authority of New South Wales. *Judith Cordingley* resigned in March to become Data Co-ordinator for Melbourne's Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital's Clayton Planning Section; the Section is planning for the relocation of the hospital near Monash University. *Andrew Lemon* resigned as Senior Archivist in February to complete his Master of Arts Thesis; he has also been commissioned by the City of Box Hill to write a history of that municipality.

\* \* \*

It can also be reported that Mr *Gwyn James* has been appointed Deputy Keeper. Whatever the personal merits of the appointment may be, many archivists will be concerned about some of its implications. Mr James, 64, came to the Public Record Office two years ago when he was appointed to the newly-created position of Senior Archivist (Publications) after a career at the University of Melbourne and in the publishing trade. The creation of the position, the third most senior in the Public Record Office, caused some controversy at the time (see for instance *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol. 5, No. 6, February 1974, pp.159-60) chiefly because of its appellation 'archivist' when applied to the duties and qualifications which, after being amended, read:

An approved University degree preferably with honours in history. A knowledge of the history of Victoria and a proven capacity for historical research. Capacity to research and produce articles and journals and ability to liaise with the graphic arts and publicity media. Experience in journal or book production is desirable. Duties: Under direction, to prepare and arrange for publication of articles and guides concerning the activities and facilities of the Public Record Office and to prepare and arrange for the publication of public records or articles prepared therefrom. Archival duties as directed.

If we set against this the duties of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records we read that he is:

To assist the Keeper of Public Records and deputise in his absence. Under the general direction of the Keeper of Public Records to develop procedures for the selection of public records worthy of preservation: to advise and assist public officers in the adoption of records management procedures facilitating selection procedures; to develop and administer procedures facilitating the use of public records under the control of the Public Record Office and to co-ordinate the activities of archival staff.

It is believed that a number of senior archivists with lengthy experience in a variety of backgrounds applied unsuccessfully for the post.