

# ICA IX London 1980

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*Note: The following note began as a brief report by Pennie Pemberton to the November ASA Council meeting. Modified, a copy was sent to all the Australian participants, most of whom responded, generally in agreement but with more or less comment, and additional material. In the light of these replies the note has been slightly amended to represent a more general view.*

ICA IX duly took place in London between 16 and 19 September 1980. About 900 archivists attended from approximately 80 countries (though perhaps not as many British and Americans as expected) — representing all types and kinds of archival work throughout the world. Among those present, from Australia, were Professor Neale (Australian Archives); Elizabeth Nathan (AA-ACT); Kevin Martin (AA-Vic); Mary McRae (Tasmania), Brian Baldwin (South Australia); Laurel Catchpool (NSW); Frank Strachan (Melbourne University); Ken Smith (then City of Sydney, now University of Sydney); Michael Saclier and Pennie Pemberton (ANU); also Graham Powell (National Library of Australia represented in London) and Pat Thompson (ex-NSW). The NZ contingent included Judith Hornabrook, Rosemary Collier, Peter Miller and Frank Rogers.

On a day to day basis the organisation of the conference worked very well — it ran to time, things took place, the translators were most efficient and the visits were most interesting. The reception at the Guildhall was enormous and held in splendid surroundings (the Hall formerly occupied by the Library and Archives — now moved to modern and most pleasant accommodation nearby.) Several of us attended evening receptions given by the Society of Archivists, British Records Association and so on, often in the most impressive and/or beautiful locations. Nevertheless, in the general opinion of many of the Australians and New Zealanders, the whole thing was rather disappointing — not quite the professional and intellectual boost we had perhaps hoped for.

The papers for the plenary session had been distributed beforehand and in most cases were merely read out rather than spoken to. The contents were often so general as to be superficial — the main exceptions being Michael Roper (PRO) on “The academic use of archives”; J.

Lindroth (Sweden) "Contemporary history and archives"; C. M. Dollar (USA) "Quantitative history and archives"; Ms L. S. Principe (Italy), "Everyman and archives", and C. A. Garcia Belsaunce (Argentina), "The Practical use of archives".

"Interventions" or "comments" had to be submitted in writing to the session's chairman beforehand though on one or two occasions "spontaneous" interventions were allowed. It rapidly became obvious that "interventions" were not general comments or questions on the papers but rather an occasion for national representatives to expound the greatness of the system back home. The first two sessions were dominated by the "Eastern Bloc", and "The West" but the "Third World" and "The Rest" soon caught on — with "migrated records" as a "hot topic" and oral history as the panacea for under-documented administrations.

In contrast to the plenary sessions, the regional and specialist meetings, being both smaller and more informal, were much more interesting, informative and successful. This was certainly the case with business archives, automation, microfilm and the section on professional associations.

One of the major difficulties with the conference was the Hilton venue, which did not lend itself to informal discussion over meals or coffee, and the lack of organised social events which mixed people. Certainly the pubs and restaurants nearby did well. We can now, however, thanks to the formal proceedings, put faces to a great many of the "names" in the international archives scene. There were visits to a number of record offices and specialist libraries in and around London — PRO at Kew being one of the prime attractions. The necessary coach trips provided excellent introductions — and at least one participant remembers with anguish trying to explain "group" and "piece" to a group of Scandinavians whose English was otherwise excellent. A little French goes a long way. As far as the business sessions of ICA were concerned, Professor Neale and Pennie Pemberton attended two of the three sessions as the category A & B delegates. Several others attended as Category C & D observers. Penny apologises for missing the second session but the rival attractions of a visit to Oxford (and the Bodleian in particular) were too great. However, Professor Neale was present at that session and we are sure Australia's interests were safeguarded. It was most interesting to see an international body with strong UNESCO connections at work.

Following a roll call of delegates, there were a series of reports on ICA itself and its various bodies (i.e. the Round Table Conference, the Regional Branches, the editorial board and the different sections and committees). The following are some of the more important and/or interesting points.

Since ICA VIII in Washington, 16 countries have joined as category A

(i.e. national institution members) including, in Oceania, the Solomon Islands — bringing us up to 5 (the others being Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea). Several other countries have ceased membership including Congo, Ghana, the Khmer Republic, Syria, Uganda, Vietnam and the Yemen. The overall membership now is:

Category A	140	Central Archives
B	21	Archival Associations
C	400	Institutional members
D	156	Individual members
E	17	Honorary members

The scale of fees has been adjusted to the following:

Category A	National Archives: a sliding scale based on GNP	
	Australia	US\$3092 (from US\$2032)
Category B	National Associations	\$100 (unchanged)
	Other Associations	\$50
C	Institutions	\$50 (from \$40)
D	Individuals	\$30 (from \$25)

The ICA is particularly concerned at the small representations in categories B, C, & D and is actively seeking ways to increase them. Professional associations, together with national archival administrations, are asked to encourage the strengthening of links with UNESCO Commissions.

Forthcoming publications of, or in association with, ICA include:

- *The International Journal on Archives* (Vol 1, No. 1 now published with article by Chris Hurley on the Archives Bill)
- *Archivum* XXVII on trade union and labour archives (now published)
- Guides to sources for the history of Asia, North Africa and Oceania
- Sources on Asian History (Library & Archives)
- Guides to UN Records
- Sources for History of Africa in Portugal
- *Sources for Architectural history of the European Capitals* (published 1980, ISBN 3-598-10093-0) ed. Agnes Sagvaril.
- *Handbook on Arrangement and Description* (by H. A. Taylor) imminent.
- *Handbook on the disposal of government records* (by T. L. Wardlaw due early 1980)
- Glossary of Archival Terminology (due late 1980)

In addition ICA is planning for texts on business archives administration; administration of machine readable archives; and disaster planning.

Mr Mabbs, Keeper of the Records (PRO) has been elected President of ICA from 1980-84. ICA X is to be held in Bonn in 1984.

The section of Professional Associations (SPAA) is concerned about

the difficulties some associations (especially those without either institutional members or government subsidies) have in paying ICA dues; the role of specialised and/or regional associations and their relationship to any national association; the question of national professional associations whose members are employed only by the state. SPAA has surveyed the 76 associations registered with them (though less than a third are Category B members) — 35 (including ASA & ARANZ) are national general associations, 11 are national specialised associations (e.g. ecclesiastic, business or social archives — all in Europe) and 29 regional general associations (21 in USA and Canada & 8 in Yugoslavia (!)). There are no professional associations in the Islamic world or in the socialist world, excluding Poland and non-aligned Yugoslavia. SPAA plans a *Bulletin* listing Associations, dates of meetings, information about activities and publications; also a Directory of Archival Associations. A collection of papers, "Archives of non governmental provenance in the World: types, structures, methods, organization and professional integration", resulting from a survey "requested, compiled and introduced" by Helmut Dahm for an SPAA open workshop contained some most interesting material.

It was reported that International Archives Week was celebrated in many countries with varying degrees of success — the details are spelt out in ICA document AG/80.7. There is talk of another series of IAW in 1984

After the Conference, Michael Saclier and Judith Hornabrook were among those who attended the British Council course at Bracknell. Mary McRae and Pennie Pemberton attended the excellent Conservation Conference at Cambridge. The Conference papers, due out in 1981, are recommended!