

BOOK REVIEWS

Finding Aids

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THE LIBRARY COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES., *Guide to the papers and books of Miles Franklin in the Mitchell Library State Library of NSW*, Sydney, 1980. Gratis. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

THE LIBRARY COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES., *Guide to the papers of Rev. John Joseph Therry in the Mitchell Library State Library of NSW*, Sydney, 1980. Gratis. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA., *Sir John Latham: A guide to his papers in the National Library of Australia*, Canberra, 1980. Available for \$A3.50 from the Sales and Subscription Unit, National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA LIBRARY., *Guide to Manuscripts held in the New Guinea Collection of the University of Papua New Guinea Library*, Compiled and edited by Nancy Lutton, Port Moresby, 1980. Available for \$A5.00 from The Secretary, University Library, University of Papua New Guinea, P.O. Box 4819, University, Papua New Guinea.

In 1964 Ruth Bordin made the relevant comment that "The holdings of a manuscript repository are useful to the scholar only to the extent that he knows what they are and how he may perceive their pertinence to his problem".¹ While the National Library publication, *Guide to Collections of Manuscripts Relating to Australia*, assists the scholar in locating sources, infrequent updates, and, of necessity, brief entries, present serious limitations to its effectiveness as a finding aid. In light of this, the publication of detailed guides to specific holdings of institutions, as

recently produced by the Mitchell Library and the National Library, and publication of comprehensive guides covering complete holdings, such as that produced by the University of Papua New Guinea Library, must be welcomed.

The *Guide to the papers and books of Miles Franklin* is the third guide to specific holdings compiled by the Mitchell Library, and published by the Library Council of New South Wales. In presentation, the guide is consistent with the preceding publications being printed by the offset process, in foolscap size with soft covers.

The guide immediately catches the eye with its pink cover and charming drawing of Miles Franklin by Norman Lindsay. A comprehensive provenance note details information on the five transfers of material which came to the Library either by donation or purchase, between the years 1940 and 1966. The papers of this well known Australian authoress comprise diaries, notebooks, copies of published and unpublished manuscripts, publishing papers, her printed books collection, and an extensive amount of correspondence including letters from such well known personalities as Vida Goldstein, Mary Gilmore, Henry Lawson, Rex Ingamells, Rose Scott, Ian Mudie and Nettie Palmer, to mention a few.

The 160 pages of the guide are devoted to the description of each of the transfers consisting of the catalogue entry, detailed contents list and an index to correspondents for ML MSS 364, a catalogue entry and detailed contents list for ML MSS 445, catalogue entry for ML MSS 1360, catalogue entry for ML MSS 276, catalogue entry for ML MSS 3639, a list of pictorial material, and a list of printed books with an accompanying location list.

The arrangement of the guide by transfer presents the user with the tedious chore of searching through a number of separate catalogue entries. One continuous list of series descriptions, with accompanying reference numbers to indicate the provenance would have been a more useful approach. The detailed entries are succinct and lucid, indicating the form and/or subjects in each series. The index to correspondents only covers letters in ML MSS 364. The biographical note on Miles Franklin consists of fourteen lines and is somewhat brief. The inclusion of information relating to her published works, giving titles and dates of publication, would have been useful. The list of printed books in her private collection includes bibliographical details with notes to enclosures and inscriptions.

The Mitchell Library manuscript guide number 4 is the *Guide to the papers of Rev. John Joseph Therry* who arrived in Sydney in 1820 and was one of the first two Roman Catholic chaplains to be authorized by both Church and State.

The arrangement of this guide is similar to number 3. There is a provenance note detailing some impressive investigative work in tracing

the changes in custody of the papers, a general catalogue entry, a detailed contents list and an index to correspondents. The detailed catalogue entries in some instances tend to be brief. Among the entries for printed material we are given the interesting series title "Various Catholic Societies 1844-1863"² but there is no indication of the particular societies or the items. The index to correspondents covers letters found in volumes 2 to 64, and gives names, years and volume numbers, but no reference is made to the page numbers. Again, the biographical note is very brief with some gaps. For example, mention is made that Reverend Therry was removed from his situation as chaplain in 1825, and was not reinstated until 1837, but no details are given on his activities in the intervening twelve years.

In 1980, the Manuscript Section of the National Library of Australia produced *Sir John Latham: A guide to his papers in the National Library of Australia*. This guide is the first in the series of guides produced by the Library on microfiche, which was a decision, we are told, "... influenced by the high cost of conventional publication"³ While the National Library is to be congratulated on its efforts in trying to come to terms with the cost of publication, the need to have access to a microfiche reader is a handicap not to be overlooked.

The guide is arranged into five sections consisting of a scope and content note, a biographical note, a list of series, series descriptions, and a name index to correspondents.

The scope and content note gives details on the origin of the material, the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, and information on the arrangement. The bulk of the papers were presented to the Library by Sir John Latham in 1963, with additional material being purchased in 1974. The collection documents nearly all of Sir John's life, but is strongest from 1918 to his death in 1964.

In arranging the papers the original order of the records was not kept. As the guide states, "Series 10-81 relate to specific events, activities, or subjects and contain all the papers that relate exclusively to those matters. The remaining papers have been arranged by form in series 1-9"⁴ Later, in describing the general correspondence series, the statement is made that: "Wherever possible letters have been placed in series relating to specific activities, subjects, events and organizations (series 10-81). The remaining letters, being of a more general nature or personal nature, have been placed in this series"⁵ Difficulties can be experienced in imposing a subject order on records. This was encountered with the Latham papers as evidenced by the comment found in series 15 for Boobooks.⁶ The description reads: "There are many references to Boobooks in series 1 and other series"⁷ Arrangement by subject can give the appearance of a tidy compact presentation, but this must be weighed against the destruction of evidence discernible only through the retention of the order in which the records were created and kept.

A comprehensive summary of Sir John's life is presented in the biographical notes with details on his career in politics, law and international affairs, his involvement with various organizations, as well as family details. The outline is referenced by three biographical works.

There are 81 series. These are first introduced in a list of series numbers, titles and quantities. The series description section of the guide gives broad details on the contents. Where series are arranged by subject, an excellent historical summary is presented on the particular topic and on Sir John's involvement.

The use of the term "series" is somewhat misleading, particularly in relation to series devoted to certain topics as they contain a diversity of record types, linked only by the subject. The items that make up the "series" are not listed and numerically identified, but are described in prose form. This method can be noted in the description for series 18, relating to Military and Naval Papers, 1915-1919:

Items 1-62 relate to Latham's military service and comprise copies of the Commonwealth Gazette, press cuttings, a few letters, district orders, tactical exercises, reports and military handbooks. Items 63-121 relate to the Navy Office. There is correspondence concerning Latham's appointment and service (April 1917-September 1919), including letters from Sir William Creswell, a diary kept by Latham in July 1917 and notes on intelligence work in October 1917, a few memoranda, and papers on AIF Education Service (1918).⁸

Presumably, describing the items in such a way means that the researcher would need to work through the 121 items to find papers required, instead of asking for them specifically by their item numbers.

The index consists of an impressive 220 pages, and includes all letters, both received and sent, in the collection.

The University of Papua New Guinea Library has produced a 142 page *Guide to Manuscripts held in the New Guinea Collection of the University of Papua New Guinea Library*. The completion of this work fulfils the promise made in 1974 to produce a fuller, more detailed, guide following the publication of the *Preliminary List of Manuscripts held in the New Guinea Collection of the University of Papua New Guinea Library*. The guide is printed by the offset process, in A4 size with soft covers. Scattered illustrations of native artefacts, and reproductions of maps, letters, and pages from diaries provide interesting relief, but unfortunately the clarity of many of the illustrations has been lost in the printing process.

The guide is arranged in five parts. The first part covers general manuscripts or photocopies of manuscripts, and is distinguished by the prefix AL. This part also includes published works such as AL 18, a poster which appeared in the *Australian* newspaper of 6 August 1969, and AL 38 a page from the *Sydney Morning Herald* dated 29 November

1884. While these items may be of interest to researchers, their inclusion in a guide to manuscripts is unjustified. The second part refers to archives and manuscripts relating to mission or church activities, identified by the code ALX. Both the Anglican and United Church deposit their archival material with the New Guinea Collection. Reference to this material is found in this section, as well as records of individual missionaries, and church affiliated organizations. Part three, which only lists one record group, is entitled Archives on microfiche, AMC. The following part lists archives and manuscripts on microfilm, AMF, consisting of records relating to New Guinea filmed by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, the Papua New Guinea Records Project, the Australian Joint Copying Project, the Mitchell Library, and microfilms prepared by the University of Papua New Guinea Library. No explanation is given as to why the guide is primarily divided by form. Arrangement by the type of creator, as adopted in part two, would have been more useful. Ease of access to this material depends largely on the index which makes up part five of the guide. The index is comprehensive with references to all personal names that appear in any description and with subject entries, in general, following library practice.

Each entry is arranged numerically according to the group number. Under this number the title, date range, quantity, and information on form, if not original, is presented. The next paragraph gives the location if the original is not held, and any access conditions. This is followed by notes on the origin, if known, and a description of the material. The use of a variety of type faces makes for easy reading, and the introduction of each section by a coloured page facilitates access.

There is great variation in the descriptions of the material. The papers of G. A. V. Stanley, comprising 20 feet of shelving, consists of a list of box numbers, a summary of material found in each box, and dates covered. On the other hand, the entry for the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, comprising 3 feet of shelving, consists of a three line description briefly outlining the contents. In other groups series have been individually identified and numbered.

Administrative details in relation to organizations and biographical details for individuals also vary. It is accepted that in general guides to entire collections extensive background information cannot be expected. However, every effort should be made to consistently provide such information as the dates of birth and death, and broad details of an individual's involvement in activities reflected in the records; and in relation to organizations, dates of origin, and functional details.

In examining the four finding aids various criticisms have been made of each. But, notwithstanding these, each institution is to be congratulated on its effort to make their records more accessible. It is hoped that they will continue to do so, and that other institutions holding

private manuscripts will be inspired to produce similar works. As well as making an institution's holdings more widely known, publication endows prestige on the institution and encourages members of the public to donate records in their possession.

FOOTNOTES

1. R. B. Bordin, "Cataloguing Manuscripts — A Simple Scheme", *American Archivist*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (January 1964), p. 81.
2. *Guide to the papers of Rev. John Joseph Therry in the Mitchell Library State Library of NSW*, (Sydney, The Library Council of New South Wales, 1980) p. 5.
3. *Sir John Latham: A guide to his papers in the National Library of Australia*, (Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1980), publicity pamphlet.
4. *ibid.*, p. 4.
5. *ibid.*, p. 9.
6. "The Boobooks were a group of Melbourne academics and professional men who dined and argued together every month or so". *ibid.*, p. 13.
7. *ibid.*, p. 13.
8. *ibid.*, p. 14.

Australian Foreign Policy Documents

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Department of Foreign Affairs. *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*. Volume IV: July 1940 — June 1941. Editors W. J. Hudson & H. J. W. Stokes. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1980. Photographs, pp. lxxviii, 795. \$35.00 postage included. ISBN 0 642 04071 0.

Meticulous editing, an attractive layout and the presentation of documents without comment have characterized this series from the outset. As in the earlier volumes, the documents are arranged in chronological order by date of despatch from Canberra or receipt in Canberra or date of cabinet meeting, Advisory War Council, etc. Editorial checking of other copies establishes for some documents a precise time of despatch and/or receipt and for others supplies mutilations and omissions from the copy for which location is given.

Variety of typeface, generous spacing in headings and between documents produces an attractive, if rather bulky, publication. Bold type numbering of documents makes for easy reference from a Subject List of Documents, arranged by war zone, and a Chronological List of Documents, summarizing content. Appendices supply time difference between cities, calendars for 1940 and 1941, and 20 pages of biographical notes.

The enticing appearance and the additional information seem designed to encourage general and specialist use of the documents. The scholar can check quickly the inclusion or omission of information sought. Alternatively, it is possible to read through the documents to obtain a cumulative view of the problems of the period and insight into decisions taken. Some indication of the status of a document is available from the opening direction, e.g. secret, most secret and personal, for the Prime Minister Personal himself. Where the chronological listing results in the intrusion of other material between despatch of a message and reply, or receipt of information and a decision, the footnotes provide cross reference. The footnotes also record the existence of additional documents and the editors' occasional failure to locate an item. Thus it is essential to read the footnotes to follow decisions. This becomes a

tedious task, not least because of the very small print used for footnotes, the great number of other documents mentioned in the notes and the practice of cross referencing to document number not page number in the indexes would be better avoided when documents run to twelve pages of text.

The editors' brief introduction provides a summary account of the main lines of developments evident in the documents. With the United Kingdom "fighting desperately for its own survival", Australia faced an "increasingly belligerent and expansionary Japan". The response was to seek military reinforcement for Southeast Asia, to extend Australia's diplomatic representation, and to develop relations with other countries and colonial territories bordering the Pacific. Above all, Australia wanted United States assistance in a war with Japan. The other zone of particular interest to Australia was the Middle East. Reinforcements were sent to North Africa and Australian troops were committed to the disastrous campaigns in Greece and Crete.

In theory the organization of the documents presents information as it became available in Canberra and thus allows the reader to follow the policy making process. The reality is otherwise. To follow policy making a great deal more information is needed on basic strategy and all developments affecting the strategic situation. Where to employ available forces, how to maintain the pressure on the enemy, which were the vital areas to defend, how serious were the effects of enemy action, were the questions of fundamental importance on which all other decisions hinged. Progress in the war in Europe was a matter of great urgency for Australia. Japan would take advantage of any weakness. It reacted to the fall of France by stepping up the pressure to cut off assistance to China. Until Britain was able to demonstrate its ability to survive German attack, there was great fear Japan would chance widening its war in Asia. Similarly, with the reverses in North Africa, Greece and Crete, this fear was renewed. At crisis point Australia's concern was to draw forces to its own zone. Paradoxically, knowledge of its vulnerability if Japan moved south provided the grounds at other times for that sense of urgency about the war in Europe.

Australians recognized Japan would take advantage of British weakness unless her pressing economic problems were relieved in a broad settlement sufficiently generous for it to be in Japan's interest to maintain that settlement. Their problem was that Australia had too little to contribute to any such settlement to pursue that against the drift and indifference of British and United States policies. Unable to remove the danger, Australia tried to keep on side with the United States and soon lost any initiative in matters relating to Japan. Long before Pearl Harbour, Australia was hopelessly tied to United States policy.

The point is that the war in Europe and North Africa was of primary importance to Australia. Not only is that never clearly focussed in these

documents but essential information about the action there is not included. There are glimpses of the primacy of that zone. The exchange over reinforcements for Malaya makes clear the importance which the Australians placed on maintaining the pressure on Germany but generally the reader is left in great ignorance of broad strategy, tactical dispositions, losses from enemy action, the extent of disruption to war production from enemy bombing, the losses at sea — in short almost all the information on which the danger of a Japanese move was being calculated. Without that information, none of the rest falls properly into place.

In fact, there was a steady flow of information to the Dominions which the editors have not included in their selection of documents. They offer no explanation for its omission though the reason appears to be an arbitrary distinction between military matters and "foreign policy". In a year in which all the important decisions were strategic, the result is a collection of documents which treats the main issues as incidental and the side issues as if they were the main issues.

To state that is not to deny the intrinsic interest of much of this material. There is a piquancy to some of the exchanges between Britain and Australia as, for instance, in the arguments used by each side in the dispute over reinforcements for Malaya and in regard to Australian diplomatic representation in Japan. The British did not welcome separate representation for Australia. In relation to the United States what emerges is the futility of seeking firm commitments and the susceptibility as a result to jumping to the nod from the United States. From the number of times Menzies, in London, was forced to give special explanation to his colleagues, he must surely have regretted his decision to go to London.

One of the more revealing episodes documented in this volume concerned the French Pacific Territories. Here, as elsewhere, the British and the Australians did not always agree on tactical moves but so far as New Caledonia was concerned Australian views prevailed because the available naval force was Australian. The outcome was discreet and skilful intervention with minimum display of force to tip the balance to De Gaulle. Important to the outcome was the Australian intervention to stabilize the New Caledonian economy and to preclude in particular Japanese penetration of that economy. The economic pressures on belligerents emerge more clearly from the documents on this episode than elsewhere in the volume.

Guides to Palaeography

Maggie Engel

Australian Archives

L. C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents*, facsimile of 2nd edition (1966), Dorking: Kohler and Coombes, 1980. ISBN 0 903967 16 2 \$22.50 (plus handling)

C. T. Martin, *The Record Interpreter*, facsimile of 2nd edition (1910), Dorking: Kohler and Coombes, 1976. ISBN 0 903967 03 0 \$27.00 (plus handling)

(Both are available from Harker's Specialist Book Importers, 74 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, 2037)

While Australian archivists and researchers have only to deal with the often degenerate handwriting of the last two centuries, our British counterparts must also cope with scripts of up to eight centuries earlier. Furthermore, a large proportion of early archival material in Britain is written not in English but in Latin and to a lesser extent in French, and is often riddled with unfamiliar marks of abbreviation. Fortunately, would-be readers have at their disposal two classic texts to assist them in their awesome task of interpretation, both of which have recently been reprinted by Kohler and Coombes.

One of these is *The Handwriting of English Documents* written by L. C. Hector, who was at one time an Assistant Keeper in the Public Record Office and a Lecturer in Palaeography at University College, London. Hector's work has long been recognised as one of the best on the topic of the interpretation of English documents. This is testified to not only by its initial critical reception but also by Kohler and Coombes' decision to reprint it more than twenty years after its first appearance in 1958.

In the first four chapters Hector covers the physical aspects of document production, the problems of language which the reader may encounter, and the scribal conventions of abbreviation, numbering, punctuation, and correction. The chapter on abbreviation is particularly useful as Hector identifies the major types of abbreviation signs and illustrates their use with numerous examples. The last two chapters contain accounts of the development of English handwriting from the Conquest to 1500 and from 1500 onwards. In the latter chapter Hector pays particular attention to the distinctive departmental hands which were still in use up to the early eighteenth century and which may present difficulty to the researcher of government records.

Perhaps the one feature which places Hector's work above others in the field is the inclusion of reproductions of manuscript material (and transcriptions of these) within the same volume. Both Johnson and Jenkinson's *English Court Hand, 1066-1500* and Jenkinson's *Later Court Hands*, for example, (while excellent works on the subject) are published in two volumes, and it is invariably the invaluable second volume of plates which is missing from the library shelves. In Hector's work, cross-references to the plates are made throughout the text so that immediate recognition of the features he discusses may be made by the reader.

The Record Interpreter was compiled by C. T. Martin who was also, incidentally, at one time an Assistant Keeper in the Public Record Office. It was first published in 1892 but is no less useful for that, dealing as it does with the forms of much earlier records.

Martin's comprehensive list of Latin abbreviations is indispensable for the deciphering of Latin documents. His approach to the subject certainly differs from that of Hector in that Martin attempts to list all the possible abbreviated forms of Latin words used in English records. This is no mean task, as the length of the list shows, and is complicated further by Martin's desire to arrange the list alphabetically to facilitate the finding of the particular word wanted. Fortunately, he explains in his Preface the principle by which abbreviation signs are incorporated into the alphabetical sequence. Martin also provides a much shorter list of French abbreviations found in English records.

It should be noted in reference to these lists, that the Latin of English records can differ markedly from Classical Latin and that the French of English documents should more correctly be termed Anglo-Norman. (Scholars of English literature will remember Chaucer's distinction of the "Frenssh of Parys" from that "after the scole of Stratford atte bowe".) Martin, in fact, follows his lists of abbreviations with a glossary of Latin words found in English documents but not in the Classical authors.

Following this are lists of the Latin forms of British placenames, surnames, and Christian names. These can prove useful for determining provenance, as the Latin forms of names are often quite unlike the English equivalents. Reference to the city of York, for instance may not be immediately recognised in the form *Eboracum*, nor Windsor in the erroneous form *Ventus Morbidus*.

While Martin's work is an invaluable reference book, it alone, however, cannot provide the novice palaeographer with the equipment needed for the interpretation of English historical manuscripts. Hector's work is the obvious starting point for the uninitiated, but *The Record Interpreter* should be kept close at hand along with Latin and French dictionaries.

Computers and Archives

Baiba Irving
 Mitchell Library
 State Library of New South Wales

Michael Cook, *Archives and the Computer*. Butterworths, 1980. 152 pp.
 ISBN 0 408 10734 0

Michael Cook begins with the statement: "It is time that there was a manual of archival applications for the computer". His assertion can only be heartily endorsed. The need for a general overview of developments, possibilities and problems in this area has been felt for a number of years. It is fitting that the first contribution aimed at filling the gap comes from a well-respected and widely experienced archivist and archival educator.

Archives and the Computer is aimed primarily at practising archivists with no computer experience and at students "who are about to enter upon careers in archives administration which will stretch well into the next century" (sadly, the Australian price may prove a bit steep for students in this country). It will, however, also be of interest to a wide range of information managers and users such as computer specialists, records managers, librarians and researchers. Where archival terminology is used it is always lucidly explained and should prove no barrier to those unfamiliar with it.

Four main topics are dealt with: the nature of computer systems; computer applications in records management and in archival description, retrieval and management; and archives in machine-readable form. In each section, the emphasis is on the description and evaluation of current practice. Useful appendices include a glossary of technical terms (archival, computer and information science) and a select directory of archival computer systems.

Cook's survey indicates that automated processes have been or could be introduced into four main areas of archival administration. Firstly, in records management, computer systems can be used to control the inflow of records into custody, the retrieval of documents, the control of document circulation, and the identification of records due for disposal at a particular time. Examples are provided of current applications for all these functions; many more will be familiar to records managers and archivists in private enterprise and governmental bodies in Australia.

Such processes may not always be under the control of archival agencies but they are of vital interest to archivists.

Secondly, automated systems can be utilised to describe archival material and to facilitate the retrieval of documents and the information contained in them. Applications of this type are now in use in many of the major overseas archival agencies and detailed descriptions of these are provided in *Archives and the Computer*. Furthermore, the development of software packages such as SPINDEX has made not only computerised finding aids feasible and worthwhile for smaller archival institutions but also more attainable the goal of archival networks.

In the third area, the management of archival agencies and records centres, computer-based systems have as yet made little headway. There is, however, as Cook points out, plenty of scope for potential applications such as the compilation of user statistics, control of record movement, and the allocation and control of storage space.

The management of machine-readable archives and records constitutes a fourth area of interest and concern. To date, it is primarily archivists who have concerned themselves with such problems as the description of computer-generated records and the determination of which records should be retained "permanently". Of wider interest have been such questions as the optimum storage conditions for the housing of machine-readable records and access to computerised information. Two problem areas which Cook does not deal with but which are currently of concern to archivists are the question of copyright and the implications of technological change and obsolescence. As increasingly more records are computer generated, all of these matters will inevitably become of concern to a wide range of record creators and users.

Archives and the Computer is broad in scope and there are, of course, shortcomings. Systems analysts and computer programmers would have benefitted from more detailed discussion of the aims, processes and methods of archival activity. For archivists, a closer examination of the implications of automation for the basic tenets of archival theory would have been valuable. Librarians could well ask for more explanation of why archivists have adopted their own systems rather than examining the relevance of the computer-based systems now widely accepted in library practice. Such matters will, undoubtedly, be addressed in further literature on the subject.

For the time being, however, Michael Cook's informative and stimulating contribution will prove invaluable. In Australia, where automated applications in archives are hardly even in their infancy, the appearance of *Archives and the Computer* is most timely.