

Book Reviews

Edited by Paul Brunton

Michael Piggott, *A Guide to the Personal, Family and Official Papers of C E W Bean*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1983, 138pp, A\$3.50.

As promised in the introduction to *A General Guide to the Library Collection and Archives of the Australian War Memorial 1982* (reviewed in *A&M* May 1982), a guide to the papers of Dr C E W Bean has been published. During his career Dr Bean (1879-1968) was employed as the official correspondent for, and later the official historian of, Australia's involvement in the First World War. Bean was also a driving force behind the establishment of the Australian War Memorial and served as chairman of the War Archives Committee, later the Commonwealth Archives Committee, and the Promotions Appeals Board of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Throughout his life Dr Bean was also engaged in a range of interests, and now the scope and significance of his papers have been clearly articulated in an attractive, soft-bound guide by Michael Piggott of the Australian War Memorial.

The guide to Dr Bean's personal, family, and official papers is composed of six sections:

- I. Introduction
- II. Biographical notes
- III. List of series
- IV. Series description
- V. Descriptive listing of selected series
- VI. Index

The Introduction contains information concerning the papers' provenance, access, and size, and makes a useful delineation between Bean's personal and official papers. However, researchers may have hoped for a stronger statement of the guide's methodology. While we are told that the "most important series" are listed at item level in section V, other series are described in section IV with a generalised treatment which is occasionally confusing.

For example, in the description of the tenth series, "writings, broadcasts, lectures and reviews," it is stated that "Bean also experimented with short stories and at least one novel but none was accepted by publishers." Are we to assume that the manuscripts are held by the Memorial, and are included

in the “correspondence, drafts, newspaper articles, book reviews and notebooks” whose accession numbers are furnished? Or is the reference made as commentary to the series? A different format for this section would have facilitated both speedier retrieval of information, and a more precise comprehension of the series’ contents.

By contrast, section V, “Descriptive listing of selected series”, is a detailed description at item level. Although summaries of individual items’ contents can be useful, and are certainly desirable if unforeseeable discrepancies or peculiarities occur between the items and the series title, their use in the case of Bean’s papers appears less judicious. For example, the two hundred and ninety six items of the first series, “Diaries and notebooks, 1914-1958”, are listed in great detail, (such as item 9: “Diary, June 1915; covers Quinn’s Post, *The Dinkum Oil*, the periscope rifle, flies, gas and Helles”), whereas the total content of the sixth series, “Official history manuscripts”, is described in a brief, nine-line precis in section IV. To some researchers the disparity between the levels of description may be disconcerting, the resultant effect being uncomfortably similar to looking through either end of a telescope — either the perspective is too close and detailed, or too distant and summary. Furthermore, the introductory disclaimer to section V, that “Subjectivity, unevenness and inaccuracy are the inevitable consequences” of item summaries, may not only caution researchers, but also compromise their faith in the guide as a whole.

These criticisms are not intended to discredit the achievement of the guide, but to question its function and methodology. No doubt one of the benefits of the “Descriptive listing of selected series” is the possibility of identifying references to particular battalions or people with the aid of the comprehensive index. The guide displays a close acquaintance with the life, career and papers of Dr Bean at all times; however, as a utilitarian tool aimed at the clarification of the entire collection, the guide might have gained from a purer and more even distillation of information in a more immediate format.

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Library Council of New South Wales, *Guide to the papers and books of Randolph Hughes in the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW* Sydney, 1982. iv + 26p, 229p ISBN 0-908 449-14-3 (Mitchell Library Manuscripts Guides, no 6). Available free on application.

Although he was born and educated in Australia, Randolph Hughes is little known in his own country. This may be in part because his chosen career - that of classical scholar - was of little concern to most of his fellow Australians, but more probably because he left Australia at the age of 26 and never returned.

Hughes was born in 1889 in Sydney, where he was educated at Sydney Boys' High School and Sydney University. It was at the latter institution that his abiding interest in literature developed and where he met two of the men most important in his life, the poet Christopher Brennan and the scholar A R Chisholm. After graduating, he taught for a time at Bathurst, where he married and fathered twin sons. In 1915 he won a travelling scholarship and departed, alone, for Europe. Following military service in Egypt (from which he was invalided out before the end of the War) he graduated with first-class honours in modern languages at Oxford, followed by a doctoral dissertation on Baudelaire. He then taught in Paris and later at the University of London, from which he resigned in 1935. (A key to his personality was noted by the *Times*' obituarist, who wrote that "His academic career was frustrated by a critical integrity, a perfectionism mingled with pugnacity, which rendered the common-room less congenial than the pursuit of learning in its purest form.") From then until his death in 1955, he lived by his writing and by marking examination papers.

Although his only novel remained unpublished, Hughes published in his lifetime editions of Swinburne's *Lucrecia Borgia* and *Lesbia Brandon* (to each of which he attached, said the *Times*, "a voluminous commentary of almost incredible erudition") as well as, among other works and journal articles, a major study of his old friend entitled *C J Brennan, an essay in values*.

Following an initial enquiry in 1952 by Phyllis Mander-Jones, the then Mitchell Librarian, about Brennan material in his possession, Hughes determined that the Mitchell Library should be the home also of his Swinburne material and his correspondence with Australians. In the event, all of his available papers and his books were presented to the Library by his son, the Rev Philip Hughes. The papers include personal and miscellaneous material; correspondence; research notes for, and drafts of, his published and unpublished works (including transcriptions of substantial bodies of Swinburne's letters and diaries); copies of his many journal articles; material on the study of European languages; and one box of material on Brennan which Hughes had intended to be exhibited by the Library. As well as this collection of 100 boxes and volumes and about 2000 printed books (which is the subject of the guide now under review), the Mitchell Library holds separately a collection of Hughes' letters to A R Chisholm together with the manuscripts of *The lost eurydice* (his unpublished novel) and his work on Brennan, and a collection of papers for Hughes' proposed work on Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The Mitchell Library's guide to the papers of Randolph Hughes comes to us in two volumes. The first, of 30 pages, is a guide to his correspondence and other papers. The second, of 230 pages, is a list of his collection of printed books. Volume I provides notes on the provenance of the collection and a biographical note, followed by a catalogue entry and a

more detailed description, an index of correspondents and a list of pictorial and other material relating to Hughes. All of these are largely adequate, providing a substantial body of information in which is mixed some tantalizing trivia. Among Hughes' correspondents, for example, are both his hatmaker and his window cleaner. However, he seems only to have exchanged (or, at least, retained) one letter with his estranged wife. More importantly, for the Australian scholar, there are considerable bodies of correspondence with A R Chisholm, R G Howarth, Jack and Lionel Lindsay, Hugh McCrae and Tom Inglis Moore.

Neither this volume nor the second is unflawed in its conception or its execution. The index to correspondents, for example, gives us name, inclusive dates of the letters exchanged and volume and page numbers, but no indication of the number or direction of these letters. Even the information given is, on occasion, suspect; I find it difficult to believe that Hughes' correspondence with Tom Inglis Moore fills 225 pages of volume 29, but comprises letters written on only two dates. Despite its flaws, however, Volume I provides a useful guide to the Hughes papers.

Volume II is a list of Hughes' books which are now housed in boxes in the Mitchell Library. Although it is entitled the "Randolph Hughes collection of French and Pre-Raphaelite literature" it includes the works of, among others, Hughes' Australian friends Hugh McCrae and R G Howarth. Each entry includes a statement of author, title, imprint, pagination and number of the book in the Hughes Collection, together with notes on features such as limitation, illustrations and the presence of annotations. These notes contain some irritating inaccuracies such as frequent references to "vellum paper", references to theses as "published" works and an intriguing reference to Alain-Fournier's *Le grand meaulnes* as book number 1771, despite indications that the Collection numbers only 1768 works in all. This is, surely, less than satisfactory for work done within the Library's Cataloguing Department.

More substantially of concern, however, is that the Mitchell Library has devoted 230 pages (which, for a guide to only a part of a single collection, is a considerable volume) to a listing of books which are, I should imagine, of relatively little interest to Australian scholars. Although the Mitchell is, like other repositories, presumably obliged to look to what is available among its internal finding aids when seeking material for its publishing programme, the publication of this book list is an unnecessary indulgence. It is however, to be hoped that the Library will continue to publish guides to its incomparable collections of Australia manuscripts, both for their own sake and as an example and encouragement to other libraries and repositories.

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Microfilming Local Government Records. *Issues and Challenges - Selected Papers from Microfilm Seminars held on 29 April and 8 July 1983.* Arranged by the Action Committee on Local Government Records in association with the Training and Development Unit, Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales, edited by Ken Smith and Patricia Ward, Library Association of Australia, Sydney, 1983. Available for \$7.00 from the Library Association of Australia, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo, NSW 2007.

Microfilming Local Government Records is aimed, as the title implies, at local government authorities. In the beginning, Pat Ward brings to the reader's attention the fact that the seminars and hence the book were created "in response to requests by local government authorities for information on microfilm as a medium for the storage and retrieval of local government records". It will, however, also be of interest to archivists and records managers working in smaller organisations, as it contains advice, information and procedures for assessing one's own microfilming needs and then implementing a suitable programme.

The book itself is roughly divided into four main sections. The first section "Setting the Scene" contains three papers which cover, as Peter Smiles states, "the current framework established by law within which records managers and archivists must presently operate in their respective tasks of managing and preserving council's records", ie the papers deal with Local Government Ordinances that refer to maintenance, preservation and access. The second section "Some Management Implications in Establishing a Microfilm Programme", contains two papers which complement each other by discussing the problem of microfilming both theoretically and practically. This section assesses the microfilming needs of an organisation and emphasises the fact that no one formula or answer exists for the establishment of a successful microfilming programme. It also provides examples of different microfilming currently used by the Council of the City of Sydney. The third section "Technical Implications: Guidelines and Specifications", includes two papers containing information on alternative microfilming programmes and ways to ensure that quality controlled standards are maintained. The fourth section consists of only one paper "The Legal Implications of Microforms" which discusses the New South Wales Evidence (Reproductions) Act of 1967 and examines its significance as regards local government records.

A plenary session by Ken Cable is also included. This informs the reader of the objectives and discussions which resulted from the seminars. Added for readers' information are a number of appendices which provide information on local government matters and proposals, a select bibliography on the microfilming of records and archives and an analysis of the seminar participants.

Janet Howse's paper "Assessing your Microfilm Needs" is essential

reading for every local government or small organisation contemplating introducing a microfilming programme. By the use of examples Ms Howse clearly stresses the importance of each organisation examining its own records and implementing its own microfilming programme. Also of interest are the papers "The Legal Implications of Microforms" by Mary-Lynne Taylor and "The Importance of Specifications" by Chris Weir, which both deal with specialised and technical subjects in a concise and comprehensive manner.

The book, however, suffers from a number of shortcomings. Repetition of information occurs throughout, primarily due to the fact that it is a collection of selected papers by different authors. No information is provided as to the number of papers presented at the two seminars or if the papers are a true representation of the seminars as a whole. Nor is there any indication as to the criteria used to select the papers that are now included. Lastly, the section breakdown of the book leads the reader to treat each of the sections separately and not as part of a whole operation.

In my opinion the information contained in the individual papers far outweighs the shortcomings of the format and therefore is a worthwhile addition to any library. The book also succeeds in making one aware of the information and planning required to implement a successful microfilming programme in any organisation.

Sandra Hinchey
Reserve Bank of Australia

Riverina College of Advanced Education, *A Directory of College and University Archives and Record Offices in Australia*. Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga Wagga, NSW, 1982. (Occasional Publication No 1). Gratis

In his introduction to this publication, Don Brech, Archivist at the College, states that his original intention in collecting the information was in order to circulate it to those interested in the archival holdings of colleges and universities in Australia. He goes on to say, quite correctly, that this information could be used by a wider public, and that it was decided to make this Occasional Publication No 1.

The *Directory* lists eighteen universities and colleges, listed in order of their respective states, four of which are colleges of advanced education. It is interesting to note that two of Brech's colleges do not appear in the Society's recently published *Directory*, even though I would imagine that they had been requested to submit an entry for both. I suggest also that there would be five universities that did not reply to Brech's questionnaire. If so, it would seem a trifle churlish for institutions which claim to be in the business of teaching. Perhaps they were a little reticent to admit that they

do not have an archivist?

The questionnaire requested the following:

Title of Institution
 Title of Repository
 Street Address
 Postal Address
 Telephone Number
 Title of head of repository
 Records held, own or collected publications

The first six answers would, of course, establish factors regarding the position of the archives in the hierarchy, to some extent at least, and this would be very relevant. It is of great interest to know to whom the archivist reports, and whether he or she is also responsible for records management to any extent. I question the use of personal names, however. The addressee should always be either "the archivist", or "the records officer/archivist".

The entries relating to records held, and to publications, are where expansion or clarification is needed. To know merely that the records of the institution are held, or that they are collected, or both, is not sufficient. A two or three line entry is needed here and could have proved adequate. For example, some institutions hold regional records, or are designated regional repositories of the archives office of New South Wales, and this is worthy of note. Others have entirely collected holdings, and none of their parent body, and again we would like to know. Similarly, oral history programmes might have been included. The use of an entry for "publications" is perhaps misleading. I would imagine that the aim was to establish whether or not guides had been published. If so, this should have a separate entry, for "publications" seems to imply something a little different.

Brech is to be congratulated on a "first", however, and the inclusion of one college of advanced education of which I personally had never heard. For one of the smaller tertiary institutions to have produced this *Directory* is most commendable.

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