

Correspondence

The Editor,

Carl Bridge's article 'The foundation of the South Australian Archives' (*Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol. 12, No. 1, May 1984) contains many interesting details. On a few of these it would be useful to have further background information, particularly the sources on which they are based. For example, readers might like to know the exact nature of 'the charter which established the colony' (p.29), said to have arrived fortuitously in 1836 on the *Tam O'Shanter*. The original 1834 South Australian Colonization Act is still held in the House of Lords Record Office, London, and the 1836 Letters Patent erecting South Australia into a Province was presented by the British Government to South Australia in 1907. The only reference I know of to the notion of a 'charter' arriving on the *Tam O'Shanter* is in a popular article published in *The Adelaide Chronicle* in 1933, but this also is undocumented and may have confused a later incident of 1851 when a copy of the 1850 Australian Colonies Government Act is said to have arrived in South Australia by error in the soiled linen bag of the master of the ship *Ascendant*. Sources and authorities that I have been able to consult do not confirm the arrival of any official foundation charter on the *Tam O'Shanter*.

(Since writing the above, a search has led back to *The Educational Gazette* of 15 August 1857 which refers to the precious vouchers authenticating the birth and baptism of South Australia arriving by the *Tam O'Shanter*, but gives no specific details. At least a printed copy of the 1834 Colonization Act may be implied by this reference).

On p.35, Dr Bridge states that G.H. Pitt (South Australian Archivist from 1919 to 1945) 'was not the "trained keeper of Archives" that Henderson envisaged'. It would be helpful to know exactly what Professor G.C. Henderson did think necessary for the post of the first South Australian Archivist. In his 1915 *Report on Archives in Europe*, Henderson is not explicit on the qualifications of a 'properly trained Keeper of Archives' beyond stating that such a person should be 'well trained in the handling of documents and versed in three or four languages'. Though I do not think Pitt possessed all the languages Henderson initially thought desirable, there seems little doubt that Henderson believed Pitt to be the man he wished to see appointed. In 1917 Henderson as Chairman of the Public Library Committee, personally chose Pitt to go to Sydney to list documents of South Australian interest held in the Mitchell Library, and later the same committee appointed Pitt

to examine State Lands Department records. Pitt's reports and methods of working were most favourably reported on by the committee. In 1918 it was Henderson's Library Committee that agreed without dissent to recommend the appointment of Pitt as the first Archivist. In his 1920 public address on the new Archives Department, Henderson remarked that the Library Board 'had taken great care in the selection of the Archivist, Mr G.H. Pitt'. Perhaps Dr Bridge has some other evidence to show that, despite his committee and public utterances, Henderson still did not believe Pitt to be the right person to be appointed?

The further reference to Pitt as an 'historian manqué' may be confusing. The word 'manqué' means 'that might have been but is not'. If Dr Bridge means that Pitt in carrying out his professional duties involved himself in historical research then it seems to me that this research was both necessary and desirable. If he means to imply that Pitt saw himself as an 'historian', I do not believe that was the case.

G.L. Fischer

The Editor,

I read with interest the review of *Guide to the papers and books of Randolph Hughes in the Mitchell Library*, (Mitchell Library Manuscripts Guides, No. 6) in the May 1984 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*. The review gives a detailed account of Hughes' life, work, papers and books, but it also contains several distinct errors of fact.

Firstly, the reviewer finds 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". It may well be hard to believe, but it is actually so. In his letter to Hughes of 30th May 1938, Inglis Moore gave a long, highly-detailed review of Hughes' work. Hughes replied at even greater length on 7th July 1938 in what he described as "a very unconventional missive", concluding "Well, this is a monster letter, perhaps in more senses than one. Probably it is the longest on record; it certainly is the longest I myself have ever sent anybody...".

Secondly, the reviewer has censured as an irritating inaccuracy a reference to "vellum paper" in the *Guide's* description of the Hughes' printed book collections. "Vellum paper" appears in most standard English dictionaries, including Webster's *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, where it is defined as "a strong cream-coloured paper resembling vellum".

"The Randolph Hughes Collection of French and Pre-Raphaelite Literature" was so-named at the express wish of Hughes' son, the Rev

Philip Hughes, who placed the books in the Library. The collection does indeed include some Australian works, as the reviewer has noted, but the Library was bound to accept the son's wishes in giving a title to the collection.

The reviewer's final criticism is that publishing the list of Hughes' books is "an unnecessary indulgence" because they are "of relatively little interest to Australian scholars". We have found in the Mitchell Library, which is frequently consulted by scholars from all over the world, that such researchers show great interest in the reading and collecting tastes of the subject of their research, especially if the works in these personal libraries include the owner's annotations. These collections receive considerable use in the Mitchell Library. It is part of the Library's policy to make better-known its specialist collections, which researchers might not necessarily expect a predominantly Australiana Library to hold. It is also consistent with the earlier *Guides* in the series to list books as well as manuscripts in a collection, to make the *Guide* as complete as possible.

The constructive comments of colleagues and researchers are greatly appreciated in the assessment and development of our *Guides*. To achieve its purpose, such criticism must be accurate.

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