

by preventing others from practising their trade. Archivists, unlike doctors and lawyers, can't do that, but looking back over the intervening decade, I can maintain with conviction that archivists today are professionally more self-aware, more sophisticated and better informed than they were. There is much more interchange between archivists and between archives. In short I believe that there has been an improvement in the profession and its environment which is greater than can be explained by simple developmental inflation. A substantial part of that increase in real value can, I believe, be laid at the door of the ASA. For that reason alone I am very proud to have been associated with its beginnings.

Finally, I am conscious of the fact that this piece will appear in an issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* which is to commemorate not only the tenth year of the ASA but also the thirtieth year of publication of the journal. I would like to take this opportunity to say a personal but public word of thanks to all those people who have, over the past thirty years, laboured to produce *Archives and Manuscripts*.

Thank you editors—Jim Gibbney ('retired!' In Canberra), Allan Horton (one issue while Jim was away), Bob Sharman (ten years on from his retirement after sixteen years as editor, still The Man in the west), Andrew Lemon (the Society's first editor), Baiba Berzins, John Thompson, Don Brech, and Nancy Lutton. To these who, despite apathy, the vicissitudes of the post, the iniquities of printers, and all the rest, have nurtured Australia's archival journal for my benefit and that of all my colleagues, thanks. Thank you too, to the nameless ones who addressed envelopes and sealed them and carted them to the post office. Sometimes there were few enough of you indeed, but you too deserve our thanks.

Well done. Happy Birthday.

Thoughts About the Next Decade

Baiba Berzins

Michael Saclier and I were both History Honours students at Sydney University in 1964. We little thought that, in 20 years' time, we would both be contributing our thoughts about the past and future of a Society (non-existent, then) for a profession which, in those days, was hidden in subterranean rooms, Nissen huts, or similarly sub-standard accommodation.

Michael's path into the profession was much more direct than mine: he did an Honours thesis on Australian history and went straight into archives administration after leaving the hallowed institution on the hill above Broadway. He knew what most Australians, including me, did not: that there *was* such a profession. It took me about ten years of being a typist, researcher, post-graduate student and university tutor not only to realise

the fascination and importance of studying Australian history and society but also to recognise that archives administration was a profession and a most satisfying and useful one at that.

The Society and its precursor, the Sydney Archivists' Group, were crucial supports to me in my early years as an archivist. Although I had used archives and manuscript libraries throughout Australia and overseas, my knowledge of archives administration was minimal. I shall always remain extremely grateful for the help and assistance of archivists such as Michael, Pat Quinn, Peter Orlovich, John Cross, Dianne Patenall and, in particular, Gerald Fischer.

I remain firmly convinced that the Society will always play a crucial role for beginning archivists and for "lone ranger" archivists by providing a network of contacts, a source of information, and an arena for the acquisition of educational and administrative skills.

In the future, I feel that the Society will need to develop continuing education resources in areas such as management, technological change, legislative implications and ethical issues. The interests of archivists in specialised areas will, I think, be catered for by the development of the Special Interest Groups created in 1983/85 and by the establishment of new ones in areas of archival activity.

Much of the Society's energy in its first ten years has been focussed on establishing a separate archival professional identity. I well remember the days leading up to the formation of the A.S.A.: my fellow Diploma of Archives Administration students and I were most impatient with what we regarded as the excessive concentration on constitutional matters and on the definition of terms. Nor did the predominantly constitutional subject matter of motions at Biennial General Meetings arouse our enthusiasm.

I now have a better appreciation of the need for these measures and the way in which they grounded and safeguarded our professional identity more broadly. Alongside the concern for professionalism there will develop, I believe, a high level of the responsibility for the archival endeavour as a whole which is already exhibited at Branch level in some states through, for example, the holding of workshops and other activities. Travelling archivists, archival consultants, and the holding of workshops outside the metropolitan area are all ideas which are currently being developed.

Furthermore, the old fears that our professional interests could be numerically "swamped" by those of identifiable groups such as the family historians, the records managers, the amateur historians, etc., are no longer likely to be realised. Such interests are now all well catered for by organisations specifically geared to their needs. In the future we will, I think, continue to develop our links with such organisations either through direct contact or through co-operative structures such as the Council of

Heritage Organisations and the Forum of Information Associations, both in New South Wales.

The next decade will also, I believe, see the Society expanding its voice and its influence. During the Society's early years, representation was generally made on matters of direct relevance to the archival profession e.g. archival legislation, copyright, the protection of cultural property. During the term of the 1983/85 Council, we endeavoured to expand this role further by making submissions on a broad range of matters which we felt had an archival dimension, albeit mostly overlooked, e.g. national information policy, national technology policy, the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings, the development of Australian Studies, multicultural resources, heritage strategy, funding for the arts. I feel that it is essential for the Society to continue to make submissions on a wide range of technical, cultural and information management issues; it is equally important to work for the adoption of relevant policies by the major political parties and to lobby for legislative and bureaucratic changes. Only by such means will the Society raise awareness of archival considerations within the political system and within the bureaucracy thereby establishing the kind of voice without which our funding and resource prospects for the future are dim. Such measures will also involve determining the Society's links with the recently-created National Archival Forum and demarcating the boundary between the two organisations.

Nowadays, the general public is more aware of archives and it is becoming increasingly rare to hear the word "dusty" applied to archivists. The image of the profession is certainly changing and the Society has undoubtedly been instrumental in this: publicity obtained for International Archives Week, 1984, and for the recent A.S.A. Conference in Canberra stressed the relevance and the activity of the Society. Other factors have of course contributed to the archivist's changing image: the upgrading of archival status and salaries, the development of post-graduate education in archives administration, the involvement of archivists in the broad spectrum of management, as well as external factors such as the upgrading of archival facilities, the impact of technology as archival material and as aid to archival administration, and the greater general use of archives. The impact of such changes has, and will continue to be, reflected in the Society's office-bearers, its activities and its publications. Properly marketed, our profession will, by 1995, appear relevant and necessary, not "dusty" and peripheral. By then, I feel, the notion of children aspiring to grow up to become archivists will not seem very strange at all.

Last, but not least, I believe that in the future we shall also look back in order to better understand our present. To date, the archival profession in Australia has been primarily interested in development, progress, the future; some, but little, attention has been accorded the past of the profession. In the years to come I think that we will recognise the need to

document more fully the lives of individual archivists, the development of archival institutions in Australia, and the history of the Society and its antecedents. The incentive will not be nostalgia but the desire to know and to control our own past, thereby assuring ourselves of a vital and relevant future.