

Book Reviews

Edited by
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Carl Newton, *Strategic Planning for Records Management and Archives*. Winchester, U.K., Society of Archivists, 1984. (Records Management Occasional Paper 4) 47pp. (Obtainable from D. Lamb, Hampshire Record Office, 20 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EF Price £3 non-members, £2 members, plus postage).

Planning is about establishing priorities, plans, goals or objectives. The recognition of planning for records and archives is not new, however, the utilisation of, and the writing about, strategic planning concepts for records and archives is relatively new.

Being employed in local government, I have witnessed strategic and corporate planning documents and the implementation of these. Carl Newton refers to the Redcliffe-Maud and Bains Reports of the early 1970's in Britain as exhorting local government authorities to adopt management techniques in planning for their services. Malcolm Bains did likewise in a visit to New South Wales in the mid 1970's.

The Council of the City of Sydney has been pre-eminent in the compilation, adoption and implementation of Strategic Plans since 1971. The next strategic plan (1987-1990) will change its focus from planning for land use and other spatial requirements to include corporate planning for the Council.

It is interesting to see the use of 'strategic planning' in Newton's publication in the sense of management to achieve goals, yet the Macquarie Dictionary's definition of a strategic plan is the 'formulation of policy about land use and development in an area e.g. The City of Sydney Strategic Plan'.

The concepts of strategic planning may not be new in local government, however, archives and records functions at a local level have been little touched by such notions. A publication such as this may serve to jolt many of us into thinking about how we as archivists and records managers plan for the archival future.

The theme of priorities, allocation of resources and forward planning appeared on the agenda at both the 1983 and 1985 conferences of the Australian Society of Archivists. The problems of carrying on and expanding

existing functions without the concomitant expansion of resources are familiar to us all. Efficiency and productivity are the buzz words.

Such themes have also been discussed at other archival forums. 'Management Skills for Archivists' was the title of a master's seminar held on 18th October, 1983, in Sydney for the Masters in Archives Administration course at the University of New South Wales. Concepts such as management skills, time management, self management and managing others were raised and discussed amongst archival practitioners. Another concept raised at that seminar was the necessity for archivists to learn/be trained in management skills. The problem of the 'lone arranger' was highlighted with one person having dual roles of manager and archivist.

This study is divided into four sections and two hypothetical case studies. The four sections are Introduction, Types of Plan, The Planning Process, and The Strategic Planning Method. The two hypothetical case studies are treated in some length (10-17 pages) — Titania PLC, a medium-sized company, and Athenia City, a local authority.

Strategic Planning Method is dealt with in most detail. The various steps in this method are:-

- (a) Corporate environment study — objectives of the organisation and organisational environment.
- (b) External environment study — technology, legislation, social factors, professional factors.
- (c) Records systems study — organisation, present activities and resources, evaluation of needs.
- (d) Strategic Programme Development — Objectives and scenarios, actions to meet the objectives and scenarios, criteria for success, resources required, expected outcomes.
- (e) Implementation Programme — developmental plan (medium — long term), operating plan (short term).

Adopting some form of strategic planning may assist archivists in defining goals and objectives, assessing future resources and achieving satisfaction in what we do for our 'daily bread'. With strategic planning and management efficiency being adopted in other parts of the organisations to which we belong, can we afford to ignore such concepts? Perhaps we can use traditional archives concepts and principles to define our short- and long-term objectives by utilising management and planning techniques.

However, we need to balance planning with action otherwise the archival future will be more fantasy than reality.

Having often thought about strategic planning for archives, I have lacked guidance and some sort of role model. This publication could serve in this capacity and is long-overdue. It should be on the reading list for

archival practitioners — whether we are a staff of one or one hundred. Here is a starting point for planning for our archival future.

You will note from my change in title the effect of the 'management' and 'planning' school. It is interesting to see in other organisations the positive identification with 'Manager of Archives' rather than 'Archivist'. Some of my archival colleagues will cringe at the title, however, a 'manager' to many others is more meaningful than 'archivist'. In the May 1986 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* I expect to see the anti-management forces rally to the debate!

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James A. Keene and Michael Roper. *Planning, equipping and staffing a document reprographic service: a RAMP study with guidelines.* Paris, Unesco, 1984. PGI/84/WS/8.

The purpose of this RAMP study is

to provide archivists, especially those concerned with planning, commissioning and managing reprographic services, with a survey of current relevant reprographic technology and with guidelines and standards which they can apply in selecting and introducing the technology most appropriate to their own specific situations. It does not set out to be an instruction manual for reprographic technicians; still less is it a guide to the latest technology for reprographic service managers in the more developed countries.

The authors succeed very well in carrying out the aims of their study. This is a book for the archivist, not the reprographic technician. In addition to providing basic technical data on reprographics in a straightforward and unambiguous manner, they also canvass a wide range of managerial issues such as costing, funding, priority setting, staff recruitment and training. At times the reader might wish for more technical detail on the equipment involved. However, a useful select bibliography has been provided in one of the appendices for those who wish to do further reading on this subject.

The book has been written with the special problems of developing countries very much in mind. The authors set out the basic standards for establishing and maintaining a reprographic centre, although they obviously appreciate the practical difficulties of trying to meet those standards in situations where resources are very limited and standards of living are quite different to those in western countries.

Whilst it is always desirable to match or surpass the national or international standards, ... there must always be room for the exercise of a little careful pragmatism.

Considerable attention is paid to the need for reliable suppliers, regular

servicing of machinery, and plentiful supplies of spare parts in countries where such things cannot be taken for granted. The difficulties of obtaining trained staff or access to training programs are also discussed at some length.

The value of the book, however, is not limited to archivists in developing countries. It also has much of relevance to Australian archivists, particularly for those engaged in planning for the establishment or expansion of a reprographics section. I found the section on the applications of reprographics particularly useful in this context. The authors consider the various purposes copying serves e.g. the provision of security copies, the use of copies as a conservation measure to protect valuable or fragile originals from heavy use, the diffusion of copies to various geographical locations, and the usual in-house copying for administrative purposes. They also discuss at some length the common misconception that microfilming a collection is a cheaper alternative to storing the originals.

Another valuable aspect of the book for planning purposes is the provision of a section on work outputs. The authors give quantitative estimates of the likely output per hour of a range of reprographic services including filming, preparation for filming, operating a reader printer, and operating a copier. Estimates of this kind are essential for costing a potential microfilm or reprographic service.

The study is in four parts. The first part describes the basic technology of microforms and hard copy and considers the purposes which an archival reprographic service might serve in relation to that technology and to the documents to be copied. The second part examines the considerations which are relevant to the planning, equipping and staffing of an archival reprographic service, including accommodation requirements and cost factors. The third part outlines the requirements at each stage of a three-stage programme for establishing and developing a basic archival reprographic service. The fourth part summarises the salient points in parts one and two in the form of guidelines.

The layout of the book is excellent. Information is well organised and presented. Each paragraph is numbered for easy reference and given a subheading. This makes it very easy to locate information on a particular topic using the detailed table of contents in the front. The book begins with a series of definitions of the various processes and techniques and their applications. A glossary of other terms used is given in one of the appendices. For a reader with very little knowledge of reprographics these definitions are excellent — clear, straightforward and easy to understand. However, I think anyone about to embark on a microfilm or photographic program would need to progress to more complex discussions of the various techniques. The book is a very good introduction to the field of reprographics, rather than being the last word on the subject.

Information provided in the book is generally accurate and reliable. There are one or two minor exceptions. For example, ideal environmental

conditions for documents to be kept while in use are given as a temperature of $20^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{C}$ and a relative humidity of $60\% \pm 5\%$ (page 29). Bitter experience suggests to me that a humidity of $60\% \pm 5\%$ in a tropical climate is far too high and is likely to lead to mould problems. Some more detailed discussion of the comparative value of 35 mm and 16 mm microfilm for archival purposes would have been valuable. Although this is touched on briefly, the problem of the reduction ratios necessary for 16 mm film is not really explored.

One other minor but annoying feature of the book is the frequency of typographical errors. Surely good proofreading is not too much to expect from a publication of this kind. It is clear that the book has been printed at minimum cost. As this is a UNESCO publication, one hopes that this is not an indication of things to come now that the United States has withdrawn its funding support from UNESCO, and Britain seems likely also to do so. Over the years UNESCO has published a number of excellent publications in the archival field. This book carries on that tradition. It is to be hoped that we will see many more publications on archives in the future.

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The Mechanical Eye in Australia, *Photography 1841-1900*. Alan Davies and Peter Stanbury with assistance from Con Tanre. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1985. ISBN 0195546040 R.R.P. \$25.

Society of Archivists Information Leaflet 2. *The Archival Care of Still Photographs*. T.J. Collings. The Society of Archivists, 56 Ellin Street, Sheffield, S14PL. 1984. ISBN 0902886134.

When considering these two publications, it is tempting to say that anyone armed with them should be able to identify correctly the process of, ascribe a date to, and conserve just about any collection of photographs in Australia. This would certainly be oversimplifying the problems associated with photographic records, and would not address the further description and indexing of the material. However, both *The Mechanical Eye in Australia* and *The Archival Care of Still Photographs* should be in the library of all institutions with responsibility for photographic images.

Yet each is important for different reasons and of the two *The Mechanical Eye in Australia* is the more significant. Although there are any number of books of historic Australian photographs, and there are certainly going to be more printed before 1988, few deal comprehensively with the history of photography in Australia. Those that do unfortunately are often inaccurate. This is not to deny the importance of books such as Jack Cato's *The Story of the Camera in Australia*, but generally they are of little use to those attempting to describe, accurately date, and set in context, Australian photographs.

The Mechanical Eye in Australia is the development of a small volume published in 1977 to co-incide with an exhibition at the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney. *The Mechanical Eye* of 1977 included two invaluable lists, Australian Photographic Studios 1842-1860 and Photographic Studios in Sydney 1860-1900. The lists included the dates at which the photographers were at particular addresses, and as most nineteenth century photographs bear some imprint of their maker, the dating of these images was greatly simplified.

The Mechanical Eye in Australia goes beyond these two lists and now covers all professional photographers in Australia until 1900 and amateurs until 1880. The authors invite notification of any they may have missed, but I would not expect there to many responses. The usefulness of such lists cannot be understated. They were compiled from directories, newspapers, or indeed any source that could provide a positive location and date for a photographer, as the extensive bibliography reveals. My only slight quibble is the way in which the names of the photographers are laid out. I would prefer to have seen the surname first, rather than the full name written normally, i.e. Freeman, William G.W. and James Freeman rather than William G.W. Freeman and James Freeman.

It is not only the lists of photographers which make *The Mechanical Eye in Australia* important. The book also presents the history of the various processes used during the last century in Australia. Examples are reproduced of each process and the text explains how the original was produced and discusses the process in its Australian context. Samples of the work of particular photographers are also shown, with emphasis given to those revealing details of the practice of photography in nineteenth century Australia.

There is a chapter headed 'Clues for Dating Photographs' which gives a description of each of the processes to aid identification. Reference is also made to the use of costume to date photographs, although this is not explored at any length, it being a suitable subject for a separate book. The reader is referred to several of the standard works on Victorian fashion.

In *The Archival Care of Still Photographs*, T.J. Collings thoroughly summarises current theory and practice in a field of conservation in which, as the author admits, there is only limited experience. Before any work is done on photographic images, Collings asks two basic questions. The first is, is the image important enough to preserve in its original state or will an archival quality copy be sufficient? To some the idea of not preserving the original record may be unthinkable. However, the number and complexity of photographic records, and the costs involved in their full conservation, should make copying as a means of preservation more widely used than it is. The other basic question to be answered in the conservation of any photograph is what process produced the image? In an appendix Collings present charts which will lead the reader to identify correctly most

processes by using the easily observable features of both negative and positive photographic images.

The bulk of *The Archival Care of Still Photographs* is taken up with discussion of the causes of deterioration of photographic records and the best methods of storage and display. Although only twelve pages in length (it is, after all, intended to be an information leaflet) Collings has produced a useful work covering a subject of concern to all those responsible for photographic records.

Photographs are to be found in nearly all archives and collections and are often amongst the most used and most remembered of the records in our care. Despite their popularity many archivists and curators feel intimidated by photographs, and sometimes these records do not receive the attention they deserve. Both *The Mechanical Eye in Australia* and *The Archival Care of Still Photographs* will contribute to the better understanding of photographic records, to the benefit of archivists and users alike.

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Directory of Research on Women in Australia 1985, compiled by Christine Fernon & Lorraine Slee, Women's Archive, History Department, Arts Faculty, ANU, ANU Printery, Canberra, 1985.

The task of keeping abreast with current research trends is a demanding but necessary activity for archivists to pursue. The *Directory of Research on Women in Australia* is an excellent tool to help us achieve this goal. It is an annual index of research work being undertaken and works that have been published on Australian women. According to the producers the aim of the work is 'to facilitate research on women by enabling those working in the same area to more easily come into contact and by reducing the incidences of duplication of research'.

The *Directory* has three sections. The first covers current research and lists research being carried out by academics, government departments, businesses and other organisations, private researchers and creative artists working on projects with an historical or social theme. There are 260 entries in this section arranged by author. Each entry gives the name and address of the author, the project title, a description of the project, details of the purpose of the study, starting and expected completion dates, funding, methodology, which lists sources and techniques used, and details of papers written to date. The projects listed have a strong emphasis on work being undertaken within academic institutions. This weakness is acknowledged in the introduction and is seen as a fault partly of the survey form distributed and partly because many people working outside the academic arena do not consider what they are doing as research.

The second section lists articles and unpublished papers. Over 500 articles were located by searching the 1984 issues of 135 Australian periodicals held in the National Library. Also included in this section are details of about 100 unpublished papers. The entries are listed by the author's name and cover a wide range of disciplines including medicine, law, health, sociology, psychology, history, politics, education, literature, economics and sport. Bibliographical details are given and entries are occasionally annotated. The unpublished papers include conference papers, speeches, submissions and government reports but are limited to those papers held by the Women's Archive. It is surprising to note that this section does not include reference to newspaper articles. This omission is probably explained by the project being undertaken by the Archive to produce an index to newspaper articles in major Australian newspapers.

The last section lists 96 books and pamphlets, the titles being obtained from the *Australian National Bibliography* and the *Australian Bookseller and Publisher*. Most of the pamphlets have been published by Government Departments. There are some annotations and full bibliographical details are listed. Indication is given if the publication is a pamphlet.

There are three indexes to facilitate access to the contents. The current research section has an additional author index and an organisation index. A subject index covers the three sections.

A considerable amount of thought has gone into the presentation of this publication. In the current research section a page has been allocated to each entry with the information being clearly set out and easily read. Criticisms are only minor — one wonders why articles found in periodicals were placed with unpublished papers and not with the other published material.

The Women's Archive was established in 1982 by a small band of enthusiasts concerned that traditional archives were failing to collect source material on women and that the records that were accepted were not being made accessible by indexing and publicity. They also claim that many women and women's groups will not deposit records with established institutions preferring destruction to placing them in archives with collecting policies that appear hostile to their interests and philosophies.

During the three years of its operations the efforts of the group moved slowly away from collecting archives to producing resource material such as the *Directory*. This appeared to be a sensible move given that the Archive has no institutional base, no permanent home, no assured source of finance and no permanent staff. The *Directory* fills that gap admirably of highlighting work being undertaken in the popular research field of women's studies. Recently a decision was made to split the Women's Archive collective, separating the collecting activities and the resource activities.

With collecting activities again becoming a priority, archivists are faced with the dilemma that the emergence of such a group, who are enthusiastic and determined to establish an archives, presents. If our prime concern is for the physical preservation of records should we support the endeavours of such a body that lacks the resources to give even the most minimal care to archives entrusted to its care? The existence of the Archive also questions the collecting policies of established institutions. Perhaps our passivity in ignoring or not actively collecting the records of minorities and non elites should be re-examined in the light of our changing society.

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