

# Book Reviews

Edited by Paul Brunton

**Understanding Progress as Process: Documentation of the History of Post-War Science and Technology in the United States. Final Report of the Joint Committee on Archives of Science and Technology**, Clark A. Elliott (Ed.), Joint Committee on the Archives of Science and Technology 1983, distributed by the Society of American Archivists.

**Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide.** Joan K. Haas, Helen Wills Samuels, Barbara Trippel Simmons, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985, distributed by the Society of American Archivists.

With the current increase in awareness of the value of records documenting the history and activities of science and technology in Australia, as evidenced by the creation of the Australian Science Archives Project, it is timely that these two publications have become available to Australian archivists and historians. Despite their North American bias both contain enough material of a general nature to make them valuable additions to our libraries and an important addition to the archival literature on appraisal.

The first of the two volumes being reviewed is the output of a body set up specifically to investigate and report on the issues involved in documenting science and technology in the United States in the post-war period. This body, the Joint Committee on the Archives of Science and Technology (hereinafter JCAST), drew on a number of professional and interest groups for its members, and has consequently produced a report that is both eclectic in its concerns and pragmatic in its recommendations.

JCAST's concern was for an overall view of the whole area of the documentation of science and technology. However, for practical reasons science and technology were limited to 'research and development; the dissemination of ideas; the transfer of technology; and professional education'. JCAST therefore focussed on what it saw as the three significant problems, i.e.:

1. the quantities of unpublished documentation on science and technology;
2. guidelines for the appraisal and description of archives of science and technology;

3. identifying users of and uses for archives of science and technology; and this is reflected in the report.

The volume opens with a survey of the organisation and documentation of science and technology in the United States, which gives a useful summary of the institutional settings for science and technology, and continues with chapters on the documentary requirements, and technical characteristics of activity in these fields including the archival implications of such characteristics. This is followed by a general treatment of archival principles and techniques as they can be applied to the records of science and technology, and a chapter of recommendations for improving the current state of management of such records. The book concludes with a discussion of the needs and opportunities for research in science and technology documentation.

The work, as outlined above, stands as a worthy example of good research method and repays study from this point of view alone, but it does indeed offer more. The first section, dealing with the organisation and documentation of science and technology in the United States, is unlikely to be of more than passing interest to the Australian reader, however, the following chapters are of more value. Science in Australia and North America generally, have shared heritage and have developed along similar lines, although with obvious differences in scale, and the treatment of documentary requirements and technical characteristics will be of relevance to the Australian experience. Further, the long chapter on appraisal and description for such records is a necessary re-statement of archival principles, differences in terminology notwithstanding. The recommendations in Chapter 5, while having specific application to the American scene, will have their Australian equivalents and are a useful starting point for any discussion of solutions to problems in the Australian context. The final chapter of the work, dealing with research needs and uses of records about science and technology, airs some relevant questions concerning the peculiarities, functions, and descriptive problems of these types of records, and describes some of the appraisal issues involved.

This leads to the second publication under review, a work that, in the words of its authors, had as its 'original inspiration... the Joint Committee on Archives of Science and Technology'. This volume on appraisal could not be of more relevance in light of an article in a recent edition of *The American Archivist* (V49, 1, winter 1986) which raises issues that must be of great concern to all practising archivists. The article, 'Appraisal and the FBI Files Case: For Whom Do Archivists Retain Records?' (pp52-63), reports a US court case in which the judges ruled that archivists at NARS involved in appraising FBI records had shown insufficient regard for public use when making disposal decisions. The thrust of the judgement was that the records belong to the American people as well as the administration that created them, and should thus be available to them (that is the public) for legitimate historical research.

Needless to say the article reports that NARS, having been admonished by the court, has undertaken a review and reassessment of its appraisal procedures, and re-examined the current literature on the theory and practice of archival appraisal. With this in mind the publication being reviewed should be of invaluable assistance to those concerned with appraising records of science and technology, hitherto a much neglected resource.

The Introduction poses the basic questions: 'What should be saved? What should be destroyed?' and, although it does not answer them, this publication goes a long way towards establishing guidelines which should help the archivist make correct decisions. The work examines the different types of activities undertaken by those engaged in scientific and technological fields and the records created by those activities, and in each of these areas treats the appraisal considerations involved in appraising the records. The first section covers personal and professional activities of workers in the field, the second covers scientific and technological activities. There is an understandable (given the employing institution of the authors) concentration on Research and Development, as opposed to actual manufacture and production, and the American bias, while not intrusive, is apparent. The work itself does not offer any radical solutions to appraisal problems but its application of traditional appraisal principles to scientific and technological records is a much needed addition to archival literature. The *Guide* is practical and not theoretical and is 'descriptive, not prescriptive. In short the authors see the *Guide* as a starting point', and should be appreciated in this light.

These publications are both of a typically high production standard (despite the 'perfect' binding of the second) and are well laid out and well structured. The type faces are easy to read, and both volumes have made good use of photographs and graphics. Despite the rather coy title of the first, and the North American slant of both works, they offer valuable practical advice and techniques, and re-pay closer study by Australians interested in this field.

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**Guide to Collections of Manuscripts Relating to Australia: a selective union list**, National Library of Australia, 1986, 21 microfiche set, 42 x reduction, ISSN 0725-9107, \$20.00 per set.

There have been many signs of the promised arrival of the *Guide*, and even the occasional prophet. From the Pisgah perspective of the 1983 ASA Conference disillusionment with the delay in its publication resulted in the motion that the Society register 'its dissatisfaction at the continued non-appearance of the fourth volume of the National Library of Australia's

*Manuscripts relating to Australia. Guide to Collections.*' If the value of the *Guide* is measured solely by the concern its non-appearance has generated in the archival community, there can be little doubt of its importance. The publication of Series D, the fourth volume of the *Guide*, accompanied by the reissue of Series A, B and C (last published in 1974), is proof of the worthiness of the project, and is a tribute to the staff of the National Library who were involved in its preparation.

Users of the earlier series of the *Guide* will be gratified to find that it is no longer necessary to negotiate three remarkably intractable folders with individual indices. The publication of Series D sees the folders transformed into microfiche with a consolidated Name Index to the four series. The alteration in the format and the cumulative index represent a major enhancement of the *Guide*.

A union catalogue cannot hope for a high degree of standardisation, and undue attention to this aspect would reduce it to a state of permanent paralysis. It would seem essential, however, to ensure that all entries conform to the premise of the subject area, namely that the manuscripts relate to Australia. Entries which do not conform, such as D308: Nan Kivell Calligraphy Collection, Medieval manuscripts, documents, c.12th Century — 1819, distort the ambit of the *Guide*, misleading researchers and potential contributors.

The role played by contributors raises another fundamental aspect of a union catalogue — its comprehensiveness. There would be little value in a guide which listed the manuscript resources of a couple of Australia's best known repositories, which have research services, accessible catalogues and guides. Lindsay Cleland remarked in an article assessing the *Guide* in 1966: 'it is essential to recognise that the *Guide* is what entries make it and that on the inflow of entries all else depends ... What the scholar needs is a *Guide* which is more comprehensive'.<sup>1</sup> Lindsay Cleland analysed the entries of Series A to show that over 50% of the material listed was held by two repositories, a proportion which remains accurate twenty years later for Series D. It is encouraging, nevertheless, to see that the number of contributing repositories has trebled since the publication of Series A, with contributors including institutions as various as the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education Library, the Deniliquin Historical Society and the Grainger Museum. Comparison between the *Guide* and *Our Heritage*<sup>2</sup> indicates that there are many other repositories which wait to be successfully encouraged to contribute.

The *Guide* retains the unique capacity of crystallising relevant collections of manuscripts held in familiar and obscure repositories across Australia. As the Director-General of the National Library comments in the introduction to the publication, the *Guide* remains 'an indispensable reference work for archival repositories and researchers alike both in Australia and overseas.' It can be hoped, therefore, that adequate resources will ensure that it maintains currency, reliability, and comprehensiveness.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. J.L. Cleland, 'The Guide to Collections of Manuscripts relating to Australia; An Outline and Assessment', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol. 3 No. 3, Nov. 1966, p.22.
2. Olga White *et al.*, *Our heritage: a directory to archives and manuscript repositories in Australia*. Canberra, Australian Society of Archivists Inc., 1983.

**Daisy Bates.** *The Native Tribes of Western Australia*. Edited by Isobel White. Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1985. 387 pp. ISBN 0642 99333 5. Hardcover.

Daisy Bates (1859-1951) is a legend in Australia. This eccentric Irish woman born in the 19th Century, the attitudes of which she retained all her long life, gained immortality in choosing to spend much of that life in poverty amongst aboriginals. She was not a trained anthropologist in the academic sense, yet she made anthropological observations about the lives of aboriginals that even her most exasperated critics recognise as valuable, if somewhat haphazard. In more recent years, interest in her has been inflamed by the gossips, when an amateur historian, engaging in some sharp detective work, spotted her name on Breaker Morant's marriage certificate.<sup>1</sup> It appears she was also a bigamist.

She has been the subject of two full length published biographies<sup>2</sup> and included in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*<sup>3</sup>, not to mention essays<sup>4</sup>, radio talks<sup>5</sup> and even a chamber opera<sup>6</sup>. Her autobiography, written for popular consumption, was first published in 1938 and in Australia in 1944<sup>7</sup>. She wrote numerous articles, both published and not published<sup>8</sup>, and indeed had produced her magnum opus, commissioned by the Western Australian government, by 1912. The book under review is the latter, having finally reached publication after being in limbo for 73 years.

The reason for this is summed up by two of Mrs Bates' correspondents, the anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, who described 'the contents of her mind...[as] somewhat similar to the contents of a well-stored sewing basket, after half a dozen kittens had been playing there undisturbed for a few days'<sup>9</sup>; and by Andrew Lang who wrote to Radcliffe-Brown that 'scissors are needed for that vast and wandering work.'<sup>10</sup>

On receipt of the commissioned work, the Western Australian Government, which incidentally had changed, had quailed at the task and returned the manuscript to the author to publish at her own expense. This was quite beyond Daisy Bates' capabilities, not only financially, but in organising the material logically, without repetition, and in readable style. Even her grammar and tenses are frequently askew as the editor, Isobel White, often remarks.

The Daisy Bates Papers at the National Library of Australia (MS 365) consist of 99 folios in 51 boxes. The manuscript of the book is contained in folios 3 — 36. Carbon copies of the manuscripts are held at the Barr Smith

Library, University of Adelaide and the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History. This reviewer has not examined the National Library Collection, but has quickly looked through those in the Battye Library. There are nine boxes of papers, five of which seem to be 'the book' in 13 sections, numerous subdivided, two boxes containing vocabularies, and two miscellaneous boxes. Trying to sort the wheat from the chaff in these 13 sections is a task in itself. Not only are there endless repetitions under different aspects, but pagination jumps around, there are insertions and deletions, and it is clear that users have been similarly confused, as the papers were not in very good order. The papers are also very fragile. This description may, or may not be the same for the National Library set, but the editor's introduction suggests that it is so.

The editor, Isobel White, seems to be singularly qualified for this task. She is a retired anthropology lecturer whose field work was in South Australia at the Yalata Aboriginal Reserve, which is at the same longitude on the Eyre Highway as Ooldea is on the Trans-Continental Railway 100 kilometres to the north. As some of the older aboriginals had known Daisy Bates, Isobel White was intrigued by anecdotes about her.

Her introduction gives not only an up-to-date and succinct biography, but puts anthropological thinking of the time in context with contemporary society. In particular, she compares the short length of time other anthropologists spent on researching their work, with the ten years spent by Daisy Bates on this work.

Each chapter in the book begins with the editor's account of what she has done with that chapter, including what she has omitted and why. She has refrained from altering the text even where grammatically incorrect. Spot checks have been made comparing the manuscript with the book and it is clear that the editor has been entirely honest about this. The difficulty has been in pin pointing the appropriate section in the manuscript which says a lot for the editor's difficult task in finding the wood amongst the trees. The final text is but one third of the full manuscript. There are copious footnotes which either explain obscurities or lead one to further reading.

Other extras in the book are an appendix listing the flora and fauna mentioned in the text, and a six page bibliography. There is also an index which is not only necessary, but very useful. I find no fault in the choice of photographs even though the editor tells the story of the loss of the most valuable of Daisy Bates' Collection in the Adelaide *Advertiser* building in 1938. The only map provided, however, is one drawn by Daisy Bates' secretary between 1936 and 1940, and this is most inadequate. The editor describes how all other maps were unsuited for reproduction. However, surely a cartographer could have been commissioned either to re-draw one or more of the original maps, or else to draw a new map combining new names and old, so as to clarify for the modern reader, just where Daisy Bates did her Western Australian field work.

That the National Library of Australia has commissioned the editorial work and published this long overdue book, is very greatly to its credit. As stated by

the Director-General in the preface, there is a policy 'to share with as wide an audience as possible the treasures of the collections.' Given the monetary restraints under which the National Library and its sister institutions in the states are obliged to operate these days, even more credit is due, especially since this production is physically excellent in paper, print, binding and presentation. Because of such broad benefits to society at large, such productions as this book should have the highest priority in all institutions which hold similar treasures.

Nancy Lutton

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Alan Queale. Letters dated 17 March 1980 to Margaret Carnegie and to the Battye Library suggesting bigamous marriage by Daisy May Bates and referring to p.8 of *In search of Breaker Morant* by Margaret Carnegie and Frank Shields, Melbourne, University Press, 1979.
2. Ernestine Hill. *Kabbarli: a personal memoir of Daisy Bates*. Sydney, 1973; Elizabeth Salter. *Daisy Bates: the great white queen of the never-never*. Sydney, 1971.
3. R.V.S. WRIGHT. 'Daisy May Bates (1863-1951)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 7, Melbourne.
4. Joan Bryant. The life and work of Mrs Daisy Bates. Perth, Graylands Teachers College, 1961; Francis Murphy. *Daisy Bates: History 2A annual essay*, 1961, Perth.
5. Daisy Adey Nicholson. The real Daisy Bates: a talk for radio. Perth.
6. Margaret Sutherland. The young Kabbarli: a chamber opera in one act. Sound disc, EMI Australia, 1973.
7. Daisy Bates. *The Passing of the Aborigines*. First Australian edition. London, 1944.
8. See for example in the Battye Library, PR 2573 in which there are 196 items, but this is by no means a complete collection, even of what is held in the Battye Library.
9. Quoted by the editor from E.L. Grant Watson *But to what purpose: the autobiography of a contemporary*. London, 1946. pp 105-6.
10. Quoted by the editor from National Library of Australia MS 2300/22.

**Bradley, Joyce et al:** *Roll call! A guide to genealogical sources in the Australian War Memorial* Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1986. ISBN 0 642 99495 1. \$7.95 Available from the Memorial, G.P.O. Box 345, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601.

Military history is only less boring than cricket because you learn of the winner more quickly. So, putting to one side this unreasonable prejudice as well as my entirely reasonable objection to subject based archival repositories, I opened the latest offering from the Australian War Memorial. I have to report that I was captivated.

This book is much more than its title states. In fact, the imprecision of the title is my only criticism. The book is actually a manual on how to exploit the records created by and about service personnel, mainly those records at the AWM, but also records existing in other institutions. As such, it would be useful not only to genealogists but to anyone who needs to research the lives of anyone who served in the armed forces.

Like Gaul, the *Guide* is divided into three. The first section is arranged chronologically by topic; for example, 'British forces in Australia, 1788 — 1913'; 'Colonial forces, 1788 — 1901'; 'New South Wales contingent to the Sudan, 1885' up to 'Vietnam War, 1962 — 1972' followed by 'Conflicts involving non-official Australian participation' and 'United Nations peace — keeping and observer forces'. For each of these topics there is a brief history followed by a 'starting-point'. This is a published or unpublished source which it is recommended should be consulted first to enable the most effective use to be made of the other sources listed. Then follows the various sources arranged under the headings 'Printed Records', 'Official Records' and 'Private Records'. Information is given in detail about the content of each source, how information from it should be requested (for example, file number, personal name, unit number, date or a combination of these), other locations (if copies are held in other repositories) and references to related records.

The description of the contents of each source (printed volume, record series) is full and clear and would enable anyone unfamiliar with the records of war to come to grips fairly quickly with the range of material which is available.

The second section is titled 'Case studies' and for each of the preceding topics the steps are explained by which information could be found about a particular named individual by way of example. Reading through these is like reading a detective story as we find successes and failures, blind leads and inaccurate sources. This section, taken with the first section, are as clear an exposition as I have seen of a single repository's resources and how to exploit them. The compilers have done a brilliant job.

If Joyce Bradley and her cohorts had stopped there we would well and truly have had our money's worth. But, as a bonus, we also find, as the third section, a listing of institutions with addresses, both within and outside Australia, which hold records relating to people associated with the Australian defence forces or which can provide other useful information and advice. The amount of information given about each institution varies and this section is not as complete as the other two but it is a useful addition to the *Guide* and places the records or the Memorial in context.

'Et al' may be bibliographically correct but it does not do justice to those who have compiled such a useful addition to Australian archival finding aids and whose knowledge of the records and enthusiasm is clear. They should be named: Joyce Bradley, Bill Fogarty, Kate Hobbs, Paul Macpherson, Michael Piggott, Bronwyn Self and Peter Stanley. Take a bow — or a citation, which is defined in a helpful glossary for the militarily illiterate like me as 'the official



written account of a combat action that led to the award of a military decoration'.

*Roll call!* is smartly designed, well printed, includes a number of illustrations of what the records actually look like, and is a sensible size — neither too large nor too small but just right. And all this at a remarkably low price. Perhaps there is an argument for subject based archives.

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### CORRECTION

In the last issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* Book Reviews Section, page 66, the name of the compiler of *Archives New Zealand: A Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and Western Samoa*, was given incorrectly. It should be Frank Rogers (not Roberts). The editor apologises for this error. Please note that the directory may be obtained from: Archives Press, 31 Chelmsford Ave., Glendowie, Auckland 1105, New Zealand.