

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Glenda Acland

Cynthia J. Durance, compiler, *Management of Recorded Information: Converging Disciplines*. Proceedings of the International Council on Archives' Symposium on Current Records, Ottawa, May 15-17, 1989. München. K. G. Saur, 1990. 218 pp. ISBN 3 598 10897 4. \$60. (Available in Australia from D. W. Thorpe, PO Box 345, North Ryde, NSW 2113.)

This symposium was hosted by the National Archives of Canada in cooperation with the Current Records Committee of the International Council on Archives. Some 300 participants from 30 countries attended, and papers were presented by speakers from Canada, USA, UK, Germany, Sweden, and Italy. The academic and occupational backgrounds of the speakers reflected the theme of converging disciplines. They represented the fields of history, archives, libraries, physics, surveying, geology, maths and computer science.

Like most conference proceedings, the thoughtfulness of the papers was not matched in quality by the panel discussions which followed the sessions, leaving the impression that the audience was either stunned or asleep, or that the recording mechanisms were inadequate. While the Symposium was conducted in French and English with simultaneous translation, all but one of the papers are in English.

Topics covered included outlines of the storage and retrieval problems involved in handling the following:

- emerging computing technologies, viz., hypermedia databases, object-oriented software, tagged-text systems;
- grey literature, i.e., material not available through normal book-selling channels, including theses, official publications, and electronic publishing;
- photographic databases;
- moving-image and sound records;
- geographic information systems (GIS) and computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) records;
- multisensory data, in documents combining motion pictures, text, graphics, sound, voice.

Other papers discussed general issues such as standardization (for soft-

ware, data management, communications); paperwork management in the automated office; information management policy formulation; the concept of information resource management; the impact of the new technologies on the professions of library and information science and publishing.

There was much here that was familiar. In literature about high tech environments one is always on the verge of astonishing developments that will transform society as we know it. Meanwhile life goes on much as before, and one wonders who is using all this new information, what organizations employ all this gadgetry. Yet the incremental changes are undeniable: the information environment has evolved steadily over the last twenty five years. Not only are there fancier tools to work with, but there are more players in the game. The concepts are more sophisticated and the problems appear to be even greater. The occupational disciplines may or may not be converging, but boundaries do seem to be dissolving—between entities and systems as well as between technologies. There is still confusion, though, between data and information, and between information and records.

Many of the problems which the Symposium identifies relate to content of information, rather than format or delivery. Much of the information created in computer systems and databases is the kind once housed in libraries and private collections. It is personal or subject-oriented information, of interest to researchers certainly, but perhaps of questionable value because it cannot be readily authenticated. Archivists traditionally have been concerned primarily with the evidentiary values of records, their authenticity as evidence of transactions conducted by an organization in the course of daily business. The informational content of records was of prime concern to historians and other researchers, but of secondary importance to archivists. It was on this basis that archival methodology was constructed. This notion of evidentiary value underlies all archival principles—provenance, original order, group and series concepts and so on. In the new electronic information environment, described so crisply by each of the speakers, archivists need to consider whether traditional archival methods and principles are still valid and applicable to new forms and formats of information. Furthermore, they need to consider whether they should be concerned with some types of information at all.

One of the speakers does suggest that the archivist's traditional focus on provenance and context, rather than on content, will remain useful, as long as "inadequate operational habits" are discarded. He advises concentrating on form and function and collective description, and jettisoning any attempt at content-based description or content analysis. In fact, the record should be viewed "as an intellectual construct and event, a virtual rather than a physical entity".

Concentration on the transactional nature of the record is also

emphasized by another participant when discussing Information Resource Management:

"If you are involved in a dispute with your staff about a specific task you assigned, it does you no good to have stored on PC discs every version of every document you ever drafted about the task. And a sophisticated system that could pull together bits and pieces of information from various electronic files, even from many different systems, in order to create a virtual document, would not provide what you want. You need to be able to retrieve a document to prove that you made and communicated the assignment to staff. You need good records." (Thibodeau, K., p. 199)

It seems an obvious point to make, but there are many information handlers who do not appreciate the evidentiary value of records.

Archivists should not be panicked into abandoning traditional concepts, but there is undoubtedly a need for some re-shaping of roles. It would be foolish, at the end of the twentieth century, not to review roles, when there is hardly an occupation which is not affected and changed in some way by the information revolution. Archivists need to examine their ideas and methods in the light of new ways of creating and storing documents, and new definitions of what a document actually is. According to one speaker, a document must now be seen as a *process*, not a *thing*.

One by one, speakers at the Symposium seem to be forecasting that many of the concepts essential to archives work are disappearing. Traditionally, the media and format in which information was contained determined the kinds of institutions in which it was housed, for example, archives or libraries. Media and format also affected access policies; and they largely determined the occupations and training of the information handlers. Now, authors can choose from a variety of media; or embody the information in a multisensory document linking text, graphics, still images, video, voice, sound. Information may be detached from its format, or easily convertible from one format to another.

Other boundaries are dissolving: information may now be detached from authorship. A database updated by many people, or which updates itself from many sources, defies attempts to assign authorship. We have thereby lost one of the traditional ways of evaluating information. Ownership is difficult to assign to such records. It becomes difficult to tell whether a record is published or unpublished. Parts of a record used to update a database may lack authorship, or time/date identification. The integrity of a record is thus difficult to determine. Provenance is a minefield. Original order is an impossible dream. Some records can no longer be said to have a life cycle.

In such an environment archivists need to be very clear about what constitutes a record, and where its evidentiary value lies; about the difference between content and context; about what the information is for and who is using it.

The Symposium papers supply plenty of lesser worries for wakeful archivists. They pose the question of what media to store documents in, to ensure permanence. They ask whether Archives of the future will be museums of obsolete equipment required to house and access successive generations of documents. They warn that questions of disposition and retention must in future be decided when the document or information is created, not retrospectively. They urge archivists and other information professionals to be more aggressive in educating organizations and authors and manufacturers about standards. They stress that standardization must be applied to products, concepts, terminology, and methods. They advise archivists to abandon traditional paper-based descriptive techniques. They beg archivists and other information workers to educate themselves in the new technologies, and start participating in the development of systems architecture.

These issues have been raised before. To ponder how many years before, makes one uneasily aware that the archival profession has been slow to take up the challenge of multimedia technologies, and has to date barely established clear standards for the handling and description of paper-based documents.

This volume is essential reading for anyone interested in future directions in the field of information. Matters dear to the heart of managers, such as economic costs and values, are barely touched. Rather, this is a reference work for practising professionals from many disciplines. It is of special importance for archivists, whose concerns lie beyond truth, to evidence; beyond média, to provenance; beyond timeliness, to permanence.

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Carol Couture and Jean-Yves Rousseau, translated into English by **David Homel**, *The Life of a Document: A Global Approach to Archives and Records Management*. Montreal. Véhicule Press, 1987. 357 pp. ISBN 0 919890 57 1 (pbk.) \$US25 (pbk.) \$US40 (bound). (Available from Véhicule Press, PO Box 125, Place du Parc Station, Montreal, Canada H2W 2M9.)

This work provides the English speaking archivist with a modern day view of the continental European (as applied by the French-Canadian) perspective of the administration of archives as a continuum not complicated by the separate concept of records management. Such a complication does not arise when, in day-to-day practice, the terms *records* and *archives* are used synonymously—or the word *archives* is used solely

for both senses. The term used to signify records of permanent value is *historical archives*.

An at times disorienting characteristic of the book is that even though the main text is written on the basis of the above perspective, the extensive *Glossary of Technical Terms* (pp. 231-321) does not expressly make the point. This *Glossary* is a most interesting exercise in comparative terminology and aims at becoming a "first step toward a definitive compilation that will be a valuable aid to everyone in the field of archives administration." (p. 231) It would have been more interesting and less anachronistic in the context of this work had it included definitions from sources of continental European origin in addition to the ten sources from England and the United States of America from which it was compiled. This is particularly the case in the light of translator, David Homel's advice that "In some cases the theoretical framework and terminology do not readily translate." (p. 19)

The book is usefully divided into three parts, each of which is divided into a separate sequence of chapters which are, in turn, further divided into numbered sections and sub-sections. Each of the sub-sections rarely exceeds two pages in length and in many cases are much shorter. They divide the subject matter into easily digestible bites. Although the book has no index, its detailed and logical list of contents, occupying twelve pages, provides easy access to particular topics.

The first part *Archives and Society* provides a brief historical perspective of archivy and introduces the professional archivist, describing his or her role as "Besides efficient records management, society has entrusted the archivist with the task of selecting those records that will be passed on through the ages . . ." (p. 25) The bulk of this part is divided equally between the development of records management policy and an examination of technological resources, where the strong emphasis on micrographics serves to remind the reader that the original edition of this work in French was published in 1982.

The second part *Archives and Administration* includes chapters on the creation and distribution of records; managing active, semi-active and inactive records; protection of vital records; and records and the law. A most helpful chapter entitled *the Records Inventory* is an explanation and description of the records survey process, including a detailed checklist of factors to be recorded and considered. *The Retention Schedule* chapter follows naturally.

The third part *Archives and Research* consists of seven chapters covering records as evidence; the concept of *Fonds d'Archives*, acquisition, evaluation and selection of historical archives; filing systems and finding aids [or arrangement and description]; marketing [promoting] archival holdings; and conservation.

Again using David Homel's words "*The Life of a Document* presents a particular view of archival science which has grown out of a dynamic and vital Quebec situation, but it has much to say to English language readers with a different set of archival traditions." (p. 19)

A most interesting and thought provoking read.

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Dov Schidorsky, *Library Archives and Information Studies*. Jerusalem. Magnes Press, 1989. 249 pp. ISBN 0 080 8 369. \$52. (Available in Australia from D. W. Thorpe, PO Box 345, North Ryde, NSW 2113.)

Library Archives and Information Studies is a collection of research papers published to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary in 1986-87 of the Graduate School of Library and Archive Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Although published in 1989, the majority of articles date from c. 1981/2.

Only two of the chapters address specifically archival matters. The more interesting, to me, was P. A. Alsberg's *Archival material in the hands of civil servants and elected officials: public or private property?* The question is a complex one and, as Alsberg shows, a variety of practices have evolved. In Israel, for example, the personal papers of a President are exempt but legislation in 1981 specifically identified "all records relating to his political activities as head of his party" as official documents. Alsberg deals primarily with the US and Canadian experience but also has sections about England, Germany and France. This is especially interesting since, as he points out, there has been little discussion of the question in European archival literature because private ownership of official papers was regarded "as incompatible with accepted state practices." The reality, however, has never been so clear-cut.

A. Arad's chapter on the defining of *archival material*, *document* and *archival group* raises many of the problems inherent in the use of these terms. I found some of the definitions confusing, i.e. "A record is an entity of information contained in a document". Other definitions, such as that of *archival group*, demand a degree of subjective assessment which I doubt most Australian archivists would ascribe to.

The other articles in this publication deal with a broad range of subjects—some specifically related to the situation in Israel (e.g. book publishing in Israel); others dealing with more general issues (e.g. predictions of citation impact). Some, understandably because of the publishing time-lag, have been overtaken by events (e.g. personality cult and Soviet

librarianship); others provide a new look at esoteric subjects (e.g. the relationship between early Hebrew printing and handwritten books) which nevertheless continue to fascinate scholars.

In summary, an intriguing pot-pourri but probably of limited interest to archivists.

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Wolfgang Wächter, editor *Study on mass conservation techniques for treatment of library and archives material*. Paris. UNESCO General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1989. 44 pp. PGI-89/WS/14. gratis.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has a major publication program well known in archival circles as the source of various RAMP studies on subjects central to archival practice. The objectives of this program and its particular studies are to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is exchanged between member countries of UNESCO and that, where possible, standard approaches to archival problems and practices can be developed. In particular, the program is intended to be of direct assistance to less developed countries, (LDCs) which may not have the resources to produce such studies or to sponsor such development.

Usually a RAMP study is produced by a sponsoring member country under the various development plans of the ICA. This study on mass conservation techniques is such a work, produced by the Regional Centre of the International Federation of Library Associations, Leipzig, in the German Democratic Republic.

However, despite the re-statement of the objectives of the RAMP program in its preface, it is very difficult to see how this study could be of any practical use to any reader, let alone one in a less developed country. The study aims "at describing the state of development in mass restoration and preservation methods whatever the medium may be . . .". It has, however, many shortcomings which prevent this aim being achieved effectively.

The first of these is that the study has been written in English by authors who are not native speakers, and has not been further edited for idiom, style or sense. The result is that it is confusing and unclear in many places, and would be additionally so for a reader whose first language is not English.

In addition to these linguistic problems, or perhaps also because of

them, the text is logically inconsistent and contradictory. For example, at p. 2–3 the authors define the term *preservation* in successive paragraphs as, first, “all the steps . . . which influence the external factors of ageing” and then, as “all the steps which are concerned with the elimination of damage”. This confuses the distinction argued in recent Western conservation literature between *preservation* and *conservation*, but it is impossible to tell whether the authors are aware of that recent literature or whether this confusion is merely a linguistic difficulty. A related problem is that the structure of the study is often confusing, with issues being raised in a seemingly random way; e.g. some technical aspects of paper-splitting are discussed in the conclusion rather than in the section on paper splitting itself.

In the more technical sections of the study these deficiencies continue to affect its usefulness. The bibliography suggests that it is based almost exclusively on German-language sources, presumably those more readily available in East Germany. Unfortunately, however, many of the technical terms are translated into novel English terms which are not the conventional ones used in the English language literature on the subject. This is of some significance, as many of the mass conservation techniques discussed in the study are the subject of an extensive literature in English-language archival, library and conservation journals. The descriptions and discussion of technical issues also do not inspire confidence in the reader. The discussion of the causes of paper deterioration (p. 3–13) is confusing and much inferior to Carl Wessel’s well documented articles in the *Library Quarterly* (vol. 40, No. 1, Jan. 1979). These shortcomings ultimately lead one to ask to what conceivable use could a reader in a less developed country put this publication?

The authors, after reviewing the high-tech alternatives, such as diethylzin (DEZ) treatment, come out in favour of paper-splitting and leafcasting as the most significant available mass conservation techniques. This final judgement is probably a realistic one for most less developed countries in view of the sophisticated technological support needed for alternative techniques. But no LDC reader could readily use the study as a guide to further, more detailed, information on any of the techniques, because the sources used are very limited and are not documented in a scholarly way. Even for the recommended techniques of leafcasting and paper-splitting, articles in the standard Western conservation journals and publications (e.g. *Abbey Newsletter*, *Paper Conservator*, *Restaurator* etc.) would be more accessible and more useful for a person who can read idiomatic English. (e.g. the study does not actually describe the steps involved in the paper splitting technique, which has apparently been mechanised in the Leipzig libraries).

This is a very unfortunate result, both for the authors, who have obviously laboured to do their best under trying conditions, and to archival readers

in general, for whom an up-to-date, comprehensive and authoritative summary of mass conservation techniques would be a service. It calls into serious question the UNESCO practice of publishing such RAMP studies without subjecting them to the rigorous peer review expected of truly scholarly publications. Certainly there is no archival institution in Australia which would benefit from acquiring this publication, and it would be a waste of scarce resources for a less developed country to do so.

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The views expressed in this review are those of its author and not necessarily of the Australian Archives.

Vincente Vinas and Ruth Vinas, *Traditional restoration techniques: a RAMP study*. Paris. UNESCO General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1989. 80 pp. PGI-88/WS/17. gratis.

Traditional restoration techniques was prepared by Vincente and Ruth Vinas and has been translated from the original Spanish. This translation has led to some confusion of terminology which is referred to later.

The list of contents (called Index) at the front of the book covers six main fields with sub-sections laid out numerically. Sections include *Support-Based Elements* with a global heading *Inks*, covering all forms of mark making media e.g. pigment watercolours, oils, pencils, crayons, etc. The supports themselves are then addressed—*Cellulose* (paper, papyrus and amate), and *protein based* (parchment and leather), including their definition and composition. Techniques are given for cleaning, deacidification, bleaching, consolidating and stabilizing.

There is a section on *Bindings* covering leather deterioration, preventive measures to be taken and practical restoration techniques. The final chapter deals with the composition, deterioration of and techniques for restoring *seals*. An extensive bibliography is included giving an acceptable range of conservation literature but alas no index as we understand it for ease of reference.

The nature of the cost saving production of this book has allowed some confusing typographical and translation errors to be printed. This may well be remedied in the future as comments and suggestions are welcomed by RAMP. Misunderstandings may arise, especially for the English as a second language reader when *rejecting*, is transcribed as

reflecting or when the word *glue* or *glueing* is used instead of the word *size* (used appropriately elsewhere in the text). The connection is evident and could be picked up with further editing of the translation.

When the authors talk about the glueing of the spine of a book a further unfortunate “typo” occurs. They give a warning against the use of polyvinyl acetates, “despite the excellent properties of these adhesives from the preventive point of view, they have the disadvantage of being reversible.” If only all conservation materials had that disadvantage!

The concepts of conservation and ethical principles are covered in the *Introduction*. Basic preservation (preventive) criteria are laid out along with those of restoration. Restoration here aims to “re-establish the physical and functional integrity of a work . . . to repair . . . the damage that the work may have sustained during its existence”. Conservation encompasses the “operations which together are intended to prolong the life of an object by forestalling damage or remedying deterioration”. A very strong emphasis is given to prior analysis and an analytical approach in order to recognize and assess the total integrity of the object or document. This emphasis is rigorously laid out and firm guidelines are given for the inquirer.

The point is made at the end of the introduction that “no one can learn restoration solely from applying what is contained in these or any other pages . . . It . . . demands sound training, a continuous learning process, and the scientific, technical and advisory back-up of a complex team . . . all restoration always involves potential risk”. All this is certainly true and there will inevitably be some risk when an inexperienced person uses this publication as the manual it seems to be, unwittingly using techniques and materials of dubious efficacy. Without the aid of any diagrams/illustrations, to the uninitiated let alone the practitioner, various *how to* descriptions fall short of getting an accurate idea across. It is difficult to visualize described procedures let alone carry them out. For instance, the information given for the restoration of metal seals, though valuable in giving a background of different techniques is hardly immediately practical. The methods mentioned, electro-chemical, electrolysis and acid treatments are technical operations requiring an understanding of the principles upon which they work and some training before being safely undertaken as archival treatments.

This RAMP study offers a wealth of conservation practices/procedures gathered worldwide. They have been condensed into a slim volume which at best can familiarize readers with past and present methods but fails as a *how to* manual. Some treatments are simply recounted, while others are positively recommended, with or without warnings or details of use.

Doubtful treatment recommendations include the use of a thick pencil to isolate graphic elements from an aqueous bath as it is easily removed

with an eraser [sic]. This process may indeed cause damage. Also it is surprising that soluble nylon (now known to become insoluble after time) is recommended as a consolidating agent. Some conservators would hotly argue against the use of epoxy or cyanocrilate [sic] resins for mending directly applied seals, or for that matter using a bath of water, alcohol and glycerine for cleaning parchment.

Advice such as the above is dispersed throughout perfectly straight forward practices. All this may seem overly critical but, together with the numerous translation and typographical errors, doubt can be cast over the whole which is unfortunate given the amount of useful material contained in the publication.

The restoration criteria at the beginning speak out for not causing "worse ills nor to apply any treatment without prior analysis". With this firmly in mind, I believe *Traditional restoration techniques* is a useful and interesting compilation of methods but even trained people need to read advisedly.

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George M. Cunha, *Methods of evaluation to determine the preservation needs in libraries and archives: a RAMP study with guidelines*. Paris. UNESCO General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1988. 76 pp. PGI-88/WS/16. gratis.

George M. Cunha is a well established authority on conservation technology. His best known work is *Conservation of Library Materials* published in 1971, in collaboration with his wife Dorothy. This work is a standard reference in any book or paper conservation workshop, particularly for its explanation of processes.

The professed intention of the study presently under review is "to assist in the development of basic training programmes and courses in document preservation and restoration and to promote harmonization of such training both within the archival profession and within the broader information field." The extent to which this is achieved obviously determines its value.

The publication is directly reproduced from the author's draft, with minor typographical errors. I have no bone to pick with this method; it is appropriate with such a work to cut costs and thus be available to those for whom it was designed. (RAMP studies are provided free on request)

The study is all embracing; that is, the assumption is made at the outset that the reader is totally unfamiliar with preservation related matters.

It includes not only the condition of the collection and its direct environment, but also preventive conservation, conditions throughout the building, good housekeeping, handling of books/records, security, and disaster prevention/planning.

Topics covered are:

1. The scope of the problem;
2. Causes of degradation of books and paper records;
3. The requirements for long range conservation;
4. Getting started in a conservation program;
5. Determining the condition of the collections;
6. Preparing a survey report;
7. Evaluating the spaces in the building;
8. Recommendations for the treatment of materials;
9. Bibliography;
10. Annex of useful forms.

In line with the aim of RAMP studies (ie for developing countries), to a large extent this study is aimed at the unskilled end of conservation. The authors' suggest that in-house staff and volunteers should do the entire survey of conservation needs, producing the statistics and logistics for a future conservation program. Thereafter, these workers are expected to do the lion's share of conservation work in all its forms, e.g. handling, environmental matters, minor repair etc. My reading of the text is that the professional conservator is kept at a distance, under the assumption that work of real value would need to be sent out for expensive professional conservation work.

The weakness of this proposition is that, when the survey produces a case for a conservation program (which it must), the survey based report has no professional authority (ie. a trained conservator) upon which to base its condition reports. It could therefore be seen to lack validity, and thus fail to win the support it needs, irrespective of whether the report itself actually tells the truth about the situation.

There is inconsistency in this proposition. On one hand, we are to assume that it is uneconomic or unfeasible to hire professional conservators, a believable proposition in third-world countries. On the other hand, Cunha asserts that worries about excess acidity in books (leading to embrittlement) can be cured by non-aqueous mass deacidification, which is unbelievably costly and environmentally dubious.

The author does not take account of any concerns raised about the potential environmental damage caused by non-aqueous deacidification. The immersion or spray liquor of such treatments consists of roughly 80% chlorofluorocarbons or freons. Even the replacement hydrochlorofluorocarbons, which break down more readily in the lower atmosphere, are measured in terms of their proportional threat to the ozone layer

compared with the freons. One is hardly a raving ratbag these days to be concerned, particularly when HCFCs were not available at the publishing date of this study, and that these details were intended for the third world.

Despite this sort of problem perhaps Cunha's overall proposition is correct. Certainly he presents a workable plan, with which any archives or library anywhere, which has not previously considered conservation, would achieve a great deal with regard to the preservation of its records. In my opinion, the fact that professional conservators (myself included) might find some material in this study disturbing or unhelpful, is largely unimportant when its overall value to malnourished archives and libraries is considered.

In Australia, however, I feel that the structural nature of the study will be of limited use to conservators, (to whom the information should be familiar) and of qualified use to archivists and librarians.

I feel sure, for instance, that the authors' suggestion that attics and basements should be inspected with a view to turning them into stack areas, (an unfortunate reality in many of our archives, which we would wish to remedy), would receive a Bronx cheer from Australian professionals. Given the authors environmental qualifications to this suggestion, it cannot be automatically assumed that this would be bad practice in other countries.

In the light of the major sub-theme, *overall and localized environment*, I was surprised that Thomson's *Museum Environment* was not cited in the bibliography. Some parts of the sections on environment seem incomplete. There is, for instance, only oblique reference to the harmful affects of diurnal humidity change and rapid cycling; and a reference to the use of window mounted air-conditioners to reduce average temperature.

Having been involved with collection survey work myself, I find the forms suggested in the appendix cumbersome. Particularly those dealing with a ten percent sample, I can not believe it is practical to assign one page to each item, particularly as this makes recovery of information more difficult. Because the individual form is only a sample, this is incapable of further use as a "conservation required" form.

Certainly there are weaknesses in the study which should have received more thought, and could benefit from revision. Overall, although the text seems overly repetitive, I feel the study has fulfilled its objective; that this will be the basis for many in house conservation efforts in areas where the guiding hand of the trained conservator is absent.

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Shaphalya Amatya, editor, *National History Guide Committee (Nepal), Source Manual Series No. 1*, published under the auspices of UNESCO, by the National History Guide Committee Nepal, Nepal. 101 pp. **Shaphalya Amatya, editor, *National History Guide Committee (Nepal), Source Manual Series No. 2***, published under the auspices of UNESCO, by the National History Guide Committee Nepal, Nepal, 1988. 164 pp. **National Archives of India, *Guide to the Sources of Asian History. India 3.1***, published under the auspices of UNESCO by the National Archives of India, India 1987. 165 pp. **National Archives of Indonesia, *Guide to the Sources of Asian History. 4 Indonesia***. Published under the auspices of UNESCO by the National Archives of Indonesia, Indonesia, 1989. 214 pp.

These texts are four in a series of guides to archives of various countries developed under a joint UNESCO and ICA project. From the vantage point of another country I believe these texts provide a useful, informative and quite entertaining account of archival sources held in Nepal, India and Indonesia. I believe they would be equally valuable to researchers of their own countries.

The editor of the Nepal Guide No. 2 states "I have hoped that this source booklet would help both His Majesty's Government and non-governmental organisations study and research the various aspects of the administrative activities and national history". The objective of the project is clearly stated in the Indonesian Guide "to produce, in each Asian country a nationwide comprehensive finding aid to the archival and manuscript sources". Despite some problems of language, typing errors, cultural and other idiosyncrasies, all volumes have achieved this objective.

Each volume contains contents pages, indexes, introductory notes and detailed descriptions of the administrative context represented by the records. The Nepalese and Indian Guides are arranged by organisational unit (e.g. Ministry) then by series. The Indonesian Guide is chronological and by type or format of the material and by region including outer islands. Formats are easy to read.

The administrative, political and organisational contexts are interesting in their own right, giving a brief account of major events in each country's history. For example, the Indian Guide contains background on the British East India Company in the early 19th century, and later details of wartime munitions, emigration and the administration of ecclesiastical matters. The Indonesian Guide contains details about the Dutch East India Company, the Netherlands Government and the period of British Interregnum. This context information gives excellent accounts of administrative history, the functions of departments, and ministries and boards, and the changing nature of organisations according to the government of the day.

The information about the record groups and series—the substance of each Guide—is quite riveting reading. Many a cold train ride home from work has been brightened by the colourful portrayal of the contents of India's, Nepal's and Indonesia's archives. I must share a few examples.

Indonesia holds four metres of “archives of the Opium Trading Company”, dating 1742–1865, “archives of the Orphanage” 1675–1878, “archives of forestry” 1776–1865 and “archives on journeys” 1742–1834.

India holds records called “body sheets” which are minutes of proceedings of the governing Council of the British East India Company. There are also records relating to “compost” 1948, and the “Grow More Food Campaign” 1947–1955. In 1890 India was producing records on the “protection of insectivorous birds in interest of Agriculture”, and on a “Scheme for Botanical Survey in India”. In 1929 records were created on the “Royal Commission on Labour” which was established to report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India.

The Nepalese Guides contain fascinating details of the culture, events, activities of government, royalty, the military, and the public service. There are “documents relating to the search for the prospective bridegroom/bride for the marriage of the king and the members of the royal family”. The archives also holds a book containing “copies of the list of those with their ranks who were executed, deported out of the country, including the Royal Collateral, General Jagat Jung Rana and of the shaving the head of the Brahmin in a square-like hair style, life imprisonment and depriving the caste-marks of those convicted of treason and the disclosures made by the persons on the way to their execution and the list of the generals who were summoned to appear before the military parade and were forced to live on ginger and fried rice in India jail”. In contrast there is a book containing “the copies of the correspondence in respect of the hospital and medical treatment of the Nepali platoons going out of Nepal during the First World War”. Or, “the original record books of schooling, drinking water tap, electric lamp, hospital, sanatorium facilities, banking service to Their Royal Highnesses Sahebjyus of Narayan Hiti Palace and Hanuman Dhoka Palace”.

I am reluctant to find problems with these texts. However there are a few minor difficulties experienced in their reading. The Nepalese Guides contain a different dating method to the one I know. Dates such as 2005 BS or 1862 BS did not convey a recognizable period to a non Nepali reader. Only the second volume contains AD and BS dates. These guides contain some language, phrasing, grammar, and spelling errors which are a product of the texts being written in a second language. Occasionally it makes for difficult reading. In contrast the India and Indonesia Guides are written well in English. All Guides give quantities of materials in

the collections. However most are expressed as numbers of documents, or of bundles. Only the Indonesian Guide gives linear metres.

Other than those few points I could not find any major problem reading or interpreting these texts. There is use of each country's national language throughout the texts. This is used appropriately for names, places and items or events of significance. Terms are usually explained in a *glossary* or *introductory note*, and they do not distract the non national reader too greatly from the detail provided.

In short, I recommend these texts for any archivist, historian, researcher or interested person who plans to visit any of these countries. The descriptions alone have made me curious to see some of the documents. Each text contains details of the access policy, the opening hours of the archives offices and the availability of copying etc. I am sure you would be well looked after.

Congratulations to these countries for keeping their archives and for preparing these guides for international use. This should be strong encouragement to UNESCO and the ICA to pursue this valuable project. I await the next volumes.

Judith A. Ellis
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Laura Coles, *Archival Gold: Managing and Preserving Publishers' Records*. British Columbia. The Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre, 1989. 69 pp. ISBN 0 86491 084 3. CAD 6.25.

Archival Gold purports to be "a guide to managing and preserving publishing records" (p. ix). Whilst the basic concept behind the text is sound, the delivery is deficient in a number of important respects. The book contains many wide generalizations, quick fix remedies and some invalid propositions.

The introductory chapter of the book discusses what archival records are and how they relate to specific types of publishers' records. The second chapter entitled *Why Are Publishers' Records Valuable?* considers the many research uses of publishers' records. These are many and varied due to the major role of publishing houses in the dissemination of information in society. This chapter provides a useful rationale for the retention of publishers' records: it is divided into a number of separate headings such as *The nature of printing technique and the impact of technological changes*, *Language and linguistics* and *The impact of books on political and social thought*.

Most of the problems in this publication arise in the discussion of a records management program. Although Laura Coles talks about the life cycle of the record as a concept, she does not cover in any detail the processes of the inception of records as a records management issue. This publication fails to fully recognize the implications of the life cycle concept and its practical consequences. Little attention is paid to actually getting material organised on to files, an essential part of enacting a comprehensive records management program.

Some of the concepts discussed in relation to implementing a records management program fail to take into account the different approaches necessary according to different types of record keeping systems. An example of this is when the reader is informed that "inherent in the concept of the life cycle is the practical notion that documents are annualized" (p. 5). This concept may apply in regard to some records under some records systems, but it does not apply *carte blanche* to all records particularly if the system is subject based.

Suggestions for appropriate staffing to establish and maintain a records management program are contained in Chapter 3. It is distressing to see the author advocating that in a small organization "one person with an interest in the work and some available time might become the records manager" (p. 14). It is even more disturbing when it is implied that many years' work experience and accumulated knowledge can be sufficiently transmitted through ". . . a one-day workshop, an office consultation with a professional records manager or archivist, or a review of relevant literature" (p. 14). At time when archivists should be promoting an increasingly professional attitude toward record keeping processes, it is unfortunate that these types of statements should be made by a member of the profession.

Later chapters suffer from generalizations and the dubious application of some archival theory. Laura Coles describes the concept of the "fat file theory" and attempts to apply a sampling technique used in relation to case files to general appraisal principles. The assertion that "the thicker a file, the more material it contains, and therefore the more significant the activity it documents" (p. 25), depends entirely on the type of records being examined. In many cases the reverse is true, the thicker files are merely bag files for a range of papers with very nebulous connection to one another.

Many of the difficult decisions in regard to the appraisal of records are not tackled in this publication. Laura Coles formulates a general retention and disposal schedule that is extremely cautious, under which all but the most temporary material is deemed to be archival. Publishing companies are thereby relieved of the responsibility for their records by passing them to archival institutions (for a financial remuneration if possible).

Overall, this publication lacks length and depth to sufficiently cover the subject matter. The role of the archivist and the records manager are severely underrated in this book. It highlights the need to keep publishing records and then enunciates the reasons clearly, but it fails to provide substantial guidance in regard to desirable practices and policies.

Fiona J. Sims
Records Manager
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Patricia Ward and Judy Washington editors, *Managing Local Studies Collections*. Sydney, Australian Library and Information Association Local Studies and Public Libraries Sections New South Wales. 1990. 76 pp. ISBN 0 86804 272 2. \$20.00.

Local studies is an expanding field of librarianship with the laudable aim of preserving materials that document and describe the history of a local community. Most of the collections in NSW are housed in local libraries operated by the local councils. In some local government areas this has led to the situation where records generated by a local council have been transferred to its library. This state of affairs is viewed as undesirable by many archivists, but it has been believed that the custodian role of the libraries was a temporary one, pending the appointment of an archivist. The publication of *Managing Local Studies Collections* appears to mark the active encouragement of librarians not trained in archival techniques to attempt to practice as archivists.

The volume consists of two parts. *Part One* includes four papers, selected from various seminars related to local studies collections over the last few years and a bibliography. *Part Two* contains sample forms and policy statements. Three of the four seminar papers, Ian Jack's *Local Studies Collections*, Terry Kass' *Research—Community Uses for Local Government Records*, and Judy Washington's *Promoting Public Awareness of Local Studies Collections*, are interesting, well written and informative. The fourth paper, by Margaret Wyatt, entitled *Managing Local Studies Resources: Arrangement, Description, Access and Preservation* raises many difficulties.

Wyatt attempts to deal with the issues related to archival records with apparently little understanding of the theories or practice of archives administration. There is no discussion of provenance, original order or series. In fact there is no real definition of what archives actually are.

The differences in approach between archivists and librarians are demonstrated throughout Wyatt's paper. There is a listing of the types of "materials" found in local studies collections. Manuscripts are listed separately from archival "materials", which are further sub-divided into personal or family papers and archives of organisations. The other media

listed includes “print materials”, “visual materials”, “cartographic materials”, “audio-visual materials”, “magnetic tape” and “museum items”. The listing appears to reflect the belief that archives only come in one medium.

Archivists think along functional lines when arranging and describing records. Wyatt’s use of the word “materials” instead of the expected “records” is interesting and revealing. It is symptomatic of the library approach to original records. Librarians traditionally adopt a format based system of arrangement and description, hence the odd term “non-book materials” (fortunately not used in this publication). Such an approach is worse than useless when dealing with archives.

Access has different meaning to archivists and librarians. Wyatt does not address the wider implications of access in the archival context. Her section headed “Access to Resources” does not mention the possibility of records being closed to public access for any period of time, either through administrative restriction or conditions imposed by a donor.

Part Two of *Managing Local Studies Collections* consists of sample forms and policy statements prepared by the Local Studies Section NSW Group of ALIA. The forms and policy statement are an amalgam of originals supplied by a variety of institutions, including several archives. No attempt will be made to assess the forms and policy statements as they concern library operations, criticism will only be made in relation to archival matters. Taken together with Wyatt’s paper the sample forms and policy statements constitute encouragement of the belief that any librarian can do the job of an archivist.

Form 1.2, a sample *Council Archives Policy*, goes further than having the library responsible for the archives. Sub-objectives 2. and 3. take the library into the area of current records management through the design of disposal schedules. This move into current records is continued in form 1.3, *Local Studies Librarian Statement of Duties*. Section 3 of this duty statement includes responsibility for the disposition of records, semi-current storage and participation, upon invitation, in planning for current council records.

Many of the forms deal with archival operations, but in no case are they adequately explained. Anyone attempting to embark on archival work solely on the basis of the forms supplied would have serious difficulties. One clear omission is that of an accession form, how initial control is established over accessions is not explained.

The series description form provided also has problems, particularly the space provided for content description and lack of provision for dealing with administrative change. The form also includes the MARC AMC format tag numbers, without explanation as to what the system is. The inclusion of MARC AMC is questionable in the Australian context as

the reviewers are not aware of any archives using this format in Australia. The use of such a format is doubtless appealing to librarians who probably find the lack of standardisation in archives perplexing.

Form 3.3, *Donor's Statement—Donation to the Local Studies Collection of Unpublished Materials*, contains a seriously misleading footnote. It is implied that unpublished materials are not covered by copyright legislation, which is far from the truth. The form itself suffers from not including provision for the transfer of copyright to the institution. Perhaps this is because it was thought that no copyright subsists in unpublished materials.

Archives are not a subset of libraries, the underlying theory and the resultant practices are quite different. True there are points of similarity between the two, but there are also similarities between libraries and museums or records management. Why then do some librarians assume that it is legitimate for them to attempt to provide instruction in archival techniques. Wyatt in her paper advises that librarians without archival training should seek the help of a professional archivist before undertaking archival work (p. 39). This advice begs the question of why a librarian should be accepting archives in the first place. Archives do not set out to establish libraries or to collect library materials, why should the reverse occur?

Ian Jack mentions the "regrettable tensions between archivists and librarians" (p. 8). Unfortunately publications such as *Managing Local Studies Collections* will possibly serve only to exacerbate them.

T. J. Robinson

K. E. Smith

The University of Sydney Archives

Paul Brunton, *Awake, Bold Bligh! William Bligh's letters describing the mutiny on HMS Bounty*. Sydney. Allen & Unwin (in association with the State Library of New South Wales), 1989. 88 pp. ISBN 0 04 442123 0. \$29.95.

Should manuscripts and archives be published? Or should such records stay in institutional hands as a way of ensuring that scholarly interests are slavishly served by forcing researches to consult the originals? Thank goodness the former attitude prevails, and it is common throughout the Western world at least, for archives to be reproduced and disseminated in such a way that maximum access is assured.

In Australia the most extensive form of publication of archives has been through the medium of microfilm, particularly in the genealogical kits produced by several State Archives over the very recent past. Earlier

examples of large-scale reproduction of archives occurred in the publication of *The Historical Records of New South Wales* (1892) and *The Historical Records of Australia* in the second decade of this century.

Awake bold Bligh! is at the other end of the scale, reproducing the text, both in transcription and facsimile, of only a few documents. But what documents! They are the three letters and enclosures written shortly after the arrival of William Bligh and his hapless companions at Coupang, Timor, in June 1789 and, later, at Batavia. The papers are part of the rich collection of Bligh material in the Mitchell Library.

The first letter was written to Bligh's wife—his “dear Betsy”—from Coupang. In facsimile the letter occupies the equivalent of some five A4 sheets, and the clarity of reproduction is such that the reader can quite easily study the original text, or at least compare it with the transcriptions that make up another chapter of the work. In this letter, Bligh displays a sense of drama and understandable egotism when he refers to his 43 day voyage in an open boat as “a Voyage of the most extraordinary nature that ever happened in the world.” (p. 24). Brunton avers that Bligh's overriding skills here lay in the way he was able to husband what little food the sailors had and to maintain their morale. The letter is full of concern and affection for his wife and children at home.

The second facsimile is of a letter Bligh wrote to Duncan Campbell two months later from Batavia. Campbell was his wife's uncle, and he had supported Bligh's appointment as commander of the *Bounty*. Along with the letter is an enclosure setting out the circumstances of the mutiny. Bligh includes a list of all those who made the boat voyage with him. The final letter, written on the same day as the previous one, was addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, described by Brunton as a “loyal supporter and regular correspondent of Bligh throughout his life” (p. 21). In this instance the enclosure starts at the beginning of the *Bounty's* voyage, with Bligh explaining, “The King upon a representation from his subjects in the West Indies, that the introduction of the Bread Fruit Tree among them would be of Universal good to constitute an Article of food . . . I was directed . . . to procure of the natives as many plants as I could stow on board the Ship” (p. 32). It includes basic navigational and other data before moving on to “relate one of the most atrocious and consummate [*sic*] Acts of Piracy ever committed” (p. 33). The account of the survivors' trip to Timor is the fullest of those in the documents.

A chapter is devoted to the background of the documents. In addition to a physical description of the letters and all-important notes on provenance, there are biographical details about the players in the drama as well as comments about the texts in which they figure. The reader is left marvelling that the papers survived the initial circumstances in which they were written, to say nothing of eventually finding their way to their present home.

The remaining three chapters consist of a concise account of mutiny; a biography of Bligh; and a discussion called "The 'Bounty' legend". The last named reflects upon some of the contemporary versions of the mutiny (including Byron's poem *The Island* from which the title of this book is taken) as well as the more fanciful and recent ones (like the 1935 Laughton-Gable film version). This account is stylishly and competently written by Brunton himself and makes fascinating reading. Two final sections in the book consist of a "Description of the mutineers", as transcribed from another document of Bligh's and, finally, there is a useful booklist for further reading.

Awake, bold Bligh! is a well-produced volume. Its format is generous enough to allow the facsimiles the prominence they deserve, and the overall design is pleasing: there is a nice balance of illustrative material (all from the Mitchell Library's own collection), dustjacket, layout, facsimiles and typeface. The book does credit to all associated with its production, and it is warmly recommended as a serious study of an enigmatic personality, as a special gift for a friend, or just as a very readable and attractive addition to your collection of Australianiana.

Chris Coggin
Director
State Archives of Western Australia

Nick Vine Hall, compiler, *Parish Registers in Australia: A list of all known Originals, Transcripts, Microforms & Indexes of Australian Parish Registers*. Middle Park. Nick Vine Hall, 1989. ISBN 0 959 7208 3 9. \$14.99. (Available from N. Vine Hall, 25 Mills St., Vic. 3200)

Trying to compile a family history? Where do you find information about your Australian ancestors? This compact book will certainly be one of the sources to which you should turn. It will tell you what parish registers exist, where they are stored and how to make contact with the holders.

The objective of this book was to record the results of a national survey on the existence and location of original and duplicate church parish registers of baptism, marriage and burial which have occurred in Australia. It lists 2664 different Australian parish records held at 107 different record centres. "Although the coverage of this first edition is mostly of Christian religions, there is some mention of others such as Buddhist, Muslim and Jewish". (p. 10)

Nick Vine Hall is well known as a radio broadcaster on genealogical matters, and presently works as a full-time genealogist. He acknowledges that his book is incomplete—but his beginning is a great start. He sees

an on-going task of keeping the list up-to-date so he requests notification of any mistakes or omissions. As one who has been involved in trying to track down parish records of congregations which entered the Uniting Church, I appreciate the time consuming task involved in trying to locate, get responses and record details. The compiler has spent, so far, nine years on this record and researching the many facets of church organisation, history and unions. I have read closely sample sections of places and parishes that I know well in Victoria and Tasmania and cannot fault the information supplied.

This publication, however, is not simply a register or index. It is a miniature history of churches in Australia. As such it should be of interest to any church historian for it gives an overview of the development and relationship of Australian churches. One of the first buildings in early settlements was a church and the church records were established before official registration of birth, marriages and deaths were required by law. "The records . . . are sometimes the only surviving evidence of a person's existence." (p. 8)

The information in this publication is well organised and easily understood. Following a general introduction the work is divided by State. A brief introduction to church history of that state is then followed by lists detailing parish name, period covered and current location of the records. Other details include church name; religious denomination; special notes code; span of years covered by the records; type of event recorded (baptism, marriage or burial); and format of record. Even the codes and symbols, and notes chapters make interesting reading with little gems of information (Church of England baptisms 1829-1832 at Port Stephens, NSW are listed in a history of Merinos!) This book will also be of great assistance in preventing unfruitful research by noting details of apparently lost registers and records. A comprehensive bibliography is included. As a bonus it also gives information about place names, with the author wondering at some of the strange and wonderful names found in the early records.

This book is recommended for all libraries, genealogical researchers and anyone interested in Australian Church history.

Valerie Johnson
User Services Librarian
Nevil Shute Memorial Public Library
Alice Springs, NT

Andrew G. Peake, editor, *National Register of Shipping Arrivals: Australia and New Zealand*, Blackburn, Victoria, Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations, 1989. 54 pp. ISBN 0 9593940 52. \$6.00

Family historians in Australia and New Zealand eagerly seek the arrival dates of their ancestors in their respective countries. Therefore any publication outlining the existence and location of immigrant arrival records is extremely useful.

This is a revised second edition with the overall book length increasing from 36 pp to 54 pp. The types of records covered include passenger lists, indexes available, passenger cards and other records relating to the arrival of ships in Australia and New Zealand.

The publication is divided into nine sections—*New Zealand, Australia, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria* and *Western Australia*. Each section includes a brief description of the records, the reference number and the name of the record repository. Each section is then further divided into primary, secondary and other sources. Within each section items are listed chronologically. The addresses for the various record repositories are listed at the end of the publication.

A six page bibliography of general references and specific sources is also included. One book that I use frequently for immigration or shipping enquiries (Michael Stammers, *The Passage Makers*, Brighton (Eng), 1978.) is not included in the bibliography. Perhaps it could be listed in the next edition as it is extremely useful for potted histories of individual immigrant ships of the Black Ball Line. I particularly like Stammers' book because it includes a drawing of Moreton Bay in 1864 showing the anchorage sites of various immigrant vessels including my own ancestors' ship.

The National Register of Shipping Arrivals: Australia and New Zealand is inexpensive and it's worthwhile contents make it an invaluable addition to every family historian's library. However, I would like to have seen more information on how the records can actually be accessed. It is all very well to tell researchers that records exist but unless they live in the relevant capital city, it can be very difficult to personally access the records. By way of example, Queensland State Archives does not offer a mail or telephone reference service (except under certain criteria which preclude most family history enquiries). This is not stated in the section on Queensland and anyone writing to Queensland State Archives would have their letter returned.

The fact that few record repositories search records themselves for enquiries is mentioned at the beginning of the list of addresses at the end of the publication. However, which institutions do, or do not, undertake research for enquiries is not indicated. The inclusion of this information would be a worthwhile addition to the next edition of this useful work.

Along the same lines I would like to see the availability of the various immigration records in other States listed. Again using Queensland as an example, the major immigration sources have been reproduced in the

Queensland Public Records Historic Resource Kit which has been sold to a number of libraries and family history societies throughout Queensland and the other Australian States. The State Library of Queensland has purchased all available immigration records on microform. Therefore Brisbane researchers can see South Australian, Queensland, Victorian, New South Wales, Northern Territory, West Australian and New Zealand immigration records.

If a future edition of this *Register* could include which records have been reproduced for sale and where they are available for research, then this already very useful book could easily become an indispensable aid to family history research in Australia and New Zealand.

Shauna Hicks
Special Reference Branch
State Library of Queensland

Belle Alderman and Margaret Hyland, editors, *Lu Rees Archives of Australian Children's Literature: A Guide to Collections*. Canberra. School of Communication, Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1989. 223 pp. ISBN 0 85839 336 3.\$15.00.

Flickering through the pages of the guide to the *Lu Rees Archives of Australian Children's Literature* produces a series of names which is as warming as a nursery fireplace. Fondly remembered authors such as Ethel Turner, Mary Grant Bruce, Norman Lindsay, May Gibbs and Ida Outhwaite are joined by contemporary exponents such as Nadia Wheatley and Dick Roughsey, and critics including Marcie Muir and Brenda Niall.

Lu Rees was the founding President of *The A.C.T. Branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia*. The archives which bears her name was created in 1974 by that branch of the Council, with the personal collection of Lu Rees as the collection's nucleus. The guide to the Archives leads us through approximately 170 collections composed principally of "archival files" and selected translations of published works. Arranged alphabetically by the name of the author or illustrator, the guide appears as cleanly presented and as easy to handle as a well-behaved child. Regrettably, good behaviour never lasts.

The guide outlines the Archives' contents for each author or illustrator, and also contains detailed commentary on each author's themes, their literary or illustrative style and full listings of awards. The balance between these two components of archival description and additional commentary shifts and moves unsettlingly, so that reading the guide is like passing through a corridor of distorting mirrors. Sections which are vital to a guide's purpose, such as those describing the contents of correspondence,

manuscripts and artwork, contract and disappear into terse summaries while commentaries such as lists of awards presented to authors, swell and expand across the page.

For example, in the entry for David Martin we are offered the rather purposeless information that his subjects are *Individuality fiction*; *Human relations fiction*; *Conduct of life fiction* and his literary style is expressed as “*Autobiography*; *Fantasy*; *Historical fiction*; *Realistic fiction*”. The actual contents of his “archival file” is baldly expressed as including “10 correspondence; 2 drafts of author’s talks; 3 manuscripts; 1 photograph . . .”. Standard features of archival description such as the status of the documents, their dates, the names of correspondents, the titles or subjects of the manuscripts, and the subjects of the photographs have shrunk from sight.

Artwork receives similar treatment. The subjects of Bruce Treloar’s books are stated as *Balloons fiction*; *Imagination fiction*; the illustrative style of his work is characterised as “. . . Line; Pen; Pencil; Watercolour”. While the contents section states that it includes “4 examples of artwork relating to author’s publications”, it neglects to state salient features such as the medium, date, subject or dimensions of the individual artwork. The guide’s format does not relate the analysis of the author’s style to the Archives’ contents, and so frustrates clear comprehension of the holdings.

What is absent from the guide is an understanding of the primary importance of contextual information—how, when, why and by whom a document was created. No doubt this is more easily forgotten in a *collecting archives* which, like an orphanage, gathers primary and secondary materials of authors into its artificial files. The result is a predicament in which researchers consulting the guide cannot ascertain, for example, if Ethel Turner’s “15 correspondence” are letters by Ethel Turner, letters to her, or letters written about her, either contemporaneously or later as secondary material. We are left with documents by or relating to a series of authors devoid of any contextual information, which are presented like rare and beautiful specimens, alone and suspended in colourless spirits.

The appearance of a new guide is to be welcomed, and the guide to the Lu Rees Archives does certainly contain valuable and accessible documentation concerning children’s literature. It is disappointing that in a wayward departure from the principles of archival description it has faltered in articulating the contents of its own Archives as lucidly as may have been hoped.

John Murphy
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Mitchell Library
State Library of NSW

Preserving our Heritage: A Paper Conservation Video Kit. Australian Library and Information Association with support from the School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales. Videotape. V.H.S. 1990. 1 hour 17 minutes. \$20.00 (Hire cost) (Available from S&M Supply Coy Pty Ltd, 18 Barrier Street, Fyshwick, ACT. 2069)

This video is part of a kit put together to “promote an awareness of the need to preserve our documentary heritage”. Although I have not been able to peruse the rest of the kit, the video obviously must be considered capable of standing alone for public viewing. As a relative newcomer to the world of archives administration I found the video a “mixed bag” of interesting archival intellectual problems and practical conservation advice.

The video is a little over an hour and a quarter long and is divided into four separate parts, each with its own introduction. The first part, of 28 minutes, is *A Case Study of the Retrieval of some Local Government Records* presented by Judy Washington, Lane Cove Local Studies Librarian and Archivist. Using a variety of photographs taken to document the procedure, Judy shared the whole process of recovering records and setting up an archival program over many years. I found this section intellectually stimulating, as it raised many questions such as the relationship between libraries and archives, and, how to set up an archival program from scratch. The support for the program from senior Council staff, the cooperation of the library and the organisation of a joint project with the local Historical Society show what can be achieved when a spirit of cooperation prevails within the community. This section succeeds in promoting the spirit and the methods for establishing programs to preserve our documentary heritage.

The next three parts deal with the direct and indirect threats of dust, dirt, mould, poor storage and time etc. They are shorter and are presented in sequence by three professional conservators, each providing practical guidelines for implementing preventative conservation. These parts are each set in a conservation laboratory.

The first, *Care of Books* by Helen Price, transports the viewer back to the everyday world with a thud. There are less variations in camera shots and the commentary slows down considerably. The content is informative, describing steps to be taken in the care of books. However, there is no attempt made to help the newcomer prioritise their use of time and resources in caring for books—should all books be given the same treatment?

Disaster Planning by Alan Howell is the next part. This time, an attempt is made to prioritise stages in planning for different types of disasters. For example, practical procedures are shown on how to dry individual books and we are introduced to the ever vigilant *Otto*—the ubiquitous

wheelie bin laden with a full complement of the necessary equipment and supplies.

Kay Sonderland's *Care and Storage Techniques for Maps and Plans* concludes the video. This was extremely well presented and packed with information. Of particular interest was her remark that research has shown that encapsulation only exacerbates acidification if the item has not been fully conserved by deacidification and washing. What should the archivist do if unable to deacidify—stop encapsulating altogether?

At the end of these three parts the viewer is reminded to consult the book *Stopping the Rot* for further information. I'm hoping it will answer some of my questions.

Overall I found the video very informative. It's good to see archival situations and conservation procedures illustrated on film. It would be useful to have a list of videos relevant to archives and available to be hired. I can think of a number of amateur "archivists" hungry for any help in preservation and intellectual concepts.

The sharing of information together with the impetus and commitment needed to create this video are worthy of congratulation to all involved. However, technical procedures such as direction, editing and set design could have been better utilized to give a more polished product. In terms of the creativity of the visual presentation, in Jenkinsonian terms, "the field awaits the labourer".

Del Cuddihy

Archivist (Special Project on records of the performing arts)

Fryer Library

The University of Queensland

C. B. Schedvin, *Shaping Industry and Science: A History of Australia's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1926-1949*. Sydney. Allen & Unwin, (in association with CSIRO), 1987. 374 pp. ISBN 0 04 909036 4. \$29.95.

CSIRO, whose earlier acronym until 1949 was CSIR, is one of the great institutions of Australia. It is great in both sense of the word; large in size and large in spirit. There cannot be many countries in the world that have such a large organisation of vigorous national research laboratories; the Soviet Union comes to mind, where the laboratories are under the aegis of the Soviet Academic of Sciences, and so do Canada and France. In Australia the feeling for a national approach to science arose as an outgrowth of the nationalism engendered during WWI and there is something of the ANZAC spirit about the establishment of CSIR

in 1926. About the same time, the other national laboratories, the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories and the Munitions Supply Laboratories were established. This book is the first of two that will cover the history of CSIR(O) from 1926 to the early 1970s. The year 1949 saw the organisation change its name as result of a Science and Industry Research Act of the Federal Parliament as a result of changes in the way science was being viewed after WWII, and it offers a "natural break" in the history of science in Australia.

Professor Schedvin's credentials for writing the book are probably the best that could be found in Australia. An economic historian, he has a strong record of understanding the Australian economy especially in the 1930s, a time that figures large in the story of CSIR. If it be true that a specialist scientist would have written with more technical understanding about, say, the drive for agricultural scientific effort in the 1920s and 1930s, there are few such specialists who would have such broad sympathies with the national scientific effort and its relationship to the existing economy as does Schedvin. CSIR(O) has an admirable record of collecting its archives and the influences of these archives is in evidence right through the book. I understand that these archives were brought down from Canberra to be consulted by Schedvin in a room in the Division of Chemical Physics, Clayton, Victoria (now Materials Science and Technology). Of course the early years of CSIR(O) have their own substantial literature in articles and books and especially *The Origins of CSIRO* by G. Currie & J. Graham and reading the notes to each chapter reveals how Schedvin has used both this secondary literature and the primary sources to give a modern balanced judgement of the development.

The post-WWI nationalism in Australia was at once at odds with the vigorous state scientific activity, channelled mainly into the large state departments of agriculture and it speaks much for the negotiating and administrative skill of the first senior scientists in CSIR that the new national laboratories and new research directions should have been seen and accepted as complementing the state work. The two persons that are revealed to have had the greatest influence are G. A. Julius (first chairman of Council and Executive) and A. C. D. Rivett (first full-time executive officer). If further evidence were needed of Rivett's administrative skill this was revealed recently. Rivett was Secretary for the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1914 held in Australia. This coincided with the outbreak of WWI but the meeting had an enormous success. The organisational problems were huge, involving Rivett working in both London and Melbourne. Rivett's records of the meeting, recently discovered in the Rivett home, were in poor condition but they have been carefully restored and have been listed by the Australian Science Archives Project. In reading them I found continual

evidence of Rivett's personal attention to all sorts of detail. There has probably not been so large or so successful a scientific meeting in Australia. Rivett enjoyed letter-writing and kept up with his friends. The quotations from these letters throughout Schedvin's book reveal much of the meanings of the manoeuvres needed for the progress of CSIR. Rivett was the right person for the 1914 meeting (when he was still less than 30 years old) and for 1926.

If there be a phrase to encapsulate what was being aimed at in CSIR it is "science for the nation, not science for profit". The contrast with today's political drive for commercial returns is most marked. CSIR concentrated at first on primary industries; the physical and chemical researches that figure so strongly now, came later on the scene. This is shown to have been a wise choice given the economics of the time. Another characteristic of Rivett was his conviction of the need for scientific autonomy, a theme that has run through CSIR(O). One of my friends told me that as Chief of a Division, when faced with a difficult decision in his own research field, he decided to ask for advice from the CSIRO Executive. The reply was in effect that "we have appointed you Chief and we expect you to make your own decisions. We expect you to succeed"; a splendid response from a big organisation that must always be tempted into monolithic decisions. There are in the book full accounts of CSIR successes in rural industries in the 1930s. The organisation became the model for similar scientific work in developing countries after WWII; thus we have India (1942), South Africa (1945) and Pakistan (1953). Rivett was delighted to see scientists with outlooks similar to himself join CSIR; it is sad to read of some early deaths. We might mention especially T. B. Robertson of South Australia who was the first Chief of Animal Health.

Readers of the book with a background of University research will find discussions on what was happening in the Universities in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s. There were some exceptional departments with good research records but the average seems to have been poor, especially in agricultural research (this was probably true also of many "Redbrick" Universities in the UK and in other countries. The well-known centres, Oxford, Cambridge (UK and Mass.), Paris, etc., were well-known because they were good in research and teaching).

Of course the state agricultural departments were active but the added, complementary activity of CSIR was to provide the fundamental research programs. CSIR realised that for a variety of reasons it had to help the Universities and it started to award research studentships. This was a wise move; good undergraduates received their research training at an overseas centre and being associated with a CSIR Division were likely to get a research position on return to Australia. When I sat on the CSIRO Scholarship Committee in the 1960s and 1970s I recall that there were

about five times as many applicants as scholarships and the standards were high; an ordinary First was not enough!

The start of WWII (and its imminence in the late 1930s) made a big change to CSIR. The physical sciences became needed as never before. Allowing for personal bias, the chapter *The Challenge of Radar* is one of the best in the book. The course of radar in Australia is now well charted in articles and books and there are several surveys of its history. Much technical detail is given in this chapter. It was a success story in two ways; radar was firstly a technical success from the ground and from ships but secondly and more importantly, for the welfare of sciences in Australia, it showed that scientists could contribute to Government needs. The two important persons D. F. Martyn and J. L. Pawsey play a large part in this chapter. Martyn's character is analysed in much detail as on this hinged many decisions. This is history in all its fullness. And of course the future successes in Radio-Astronomy in Australia, due especially to Pawsey, grew out of the wartime successes in radar. CSIR's aims were broadened to allow basic research for its own sake and we might well pose the question to CSIRO in this year of writing, has Australia lost this valuable, indeed necessary, asset?

The wartime growth in numbers of person employed in CSIR was astonishing; in 1940 there were 463 and in 1949, 2,479, a five-fold increase. Rivett's view of CSIR as a "family" of scientists could no longer be sustained; he was disappointed. But there were big changes throughout the world in the structure of science after WWII and Schedvin traces their influence in CSIR. In brief, the American work on nuclear weapons and the explosion of bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki involved science with Government as never before. We cannot look back and say that the Allies could have avoided this involvement. The spirit of the times in 1939 and 1940 scarcely left any room for scientists to do anything but accept the liaison with Government. And when J. R. Oppenheimer said after WWII the memorable phrase, "The physicists have known sin", this meant not that they were unaware of sin before the war but that they had now enlarged their moral responsibilities. The effects on Australia were seen in the problems of secret work, anathema to Rivett's spirit, but becoming more necessary with every year after 1945. Questions of surveillance were raised and unsavoury episodes aired in which suspicion of the "free thinking" scientists in CSIR were raised finally in Parliament. The consequences were a new Charter and a change of name for the organisation. Rivett retired hurt in 1949.

This fine book is both an expression of the way in which Australia developed a national scientific spirit and also a tribute to Rivett with his humanity and high administrative skills. I was left with a desire to know how the organisation was going to develop. Having worked closely in research with several colleagues in CSIRO and admiring the work

and influence of many of its scientists, I have watched with some dismay the recent steady departure from the ideals of Rivett. Believing that these changes have their origin in the past and in the ethos expressing the political and economic character of Australia, I look forward keenly to the second volume from Professor Schedvin.

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