

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Edited by Glenda Acland**

**International Council on Archives, *Proceedings of the Second European Conference on Archives, 9-13 May 1989*** (publication sponsored by the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC) no date of publication apparent, 117 pp.

## **Background to the Conference**

The First European Conference on Archives was held in Budapest in 1985. Planning for the Second Conference was underway before the delegates to Budapest had even met. Due to American interest, in the guise of Robert M. Warner (Dean of the School of Information and Library Studies at the University of Michigan and former Archivist of the United States), and the support of the University of Michigan, a formal invitation to hold the Second Conference in Michigan was issued in 1986. ICA's Executive Committee accepted the invitation. The Conference was held at the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus from 9-13 May, 1989.

From the list of participants included at the rear of the volume (which very usefully includes not just their names, but their positions and their addresses) it appears that some 49 people attended the Conference. Robert Warner's introductory remarks reveal that the Conference cost over \$75,000 to stage but that the full amount was recouped due to the generosity of sponsors.

## **Structure of the Conference and the Proceedings**

The central theme for the Conference was a comparison between North American and European archival systems: the divergences and convergences. The Conference had four sessions:

- Convergences and Divergences
- Archival Typology
- Archival Identity
- Technology and Archives

The papers for each of these sessions, together with the remarks made at the opening and closing sessions, make up the bulk of the volume. Most of the papers are printed in both English and French.

Each session concluded with general discussion — a summary of the discussion is also included in the proceedings. However, comments made in the course of the discussion are printed in either English or French. For the mono-lingual this makes the discussion segments read discordantly.

The Conference included a Conference dinner at which ICA President, Jean Favier, was the guest speaker. The text of this talk is not included in the proceedings.

The Conference heard ten presentations, the speakers included some whose work is well known in Australia — Helen Samuels, Peter Sigmond, Francis Blouin, Charles Dollar and Carol Couture.

The value of this volume of proceedings is that, in a compact fashion, it provides us with a comparative study of North American and European thinking and practice in the four general areas itemised above. Each of the essays is interesting reading in its own right, some are stimulating and all are challenging if concurrently with reading you are trying to compare the Australian archival experience and landscape.

### **Session 1 — Convergences and Divergences**

Peter Sigmond and Francis Blouin look at convergences and divergences in archival tradition from the European and North American perspectives respectively. The papers are wide ranging analyses of an “outsider” and are fascinating.

Sigmond defines the “European view”, looks at some aspects of the North American situation, the North American archival framework, missions and goals, and training and organisation.

He hazards that because “archives in America have never been perceived as instruments to regulate, organise and control society in the way that they have been in Europe” this has ramifications for the way they are maintained and treated (p. 6). He postulates that underfunding of archives is common in both North America and Europe: in North America this can be attributed to its relatively short history, the corollary being a lack of appreciation of the use of the historical records; in Europe there is too much history and too much to preserve therefore funds are spread very thinly.

Sigmond acknowledges the enormous land mass that North America constitutes but argues that is not a disadvantage because of the commonality of language and because of the excellent communication (formal and informal) that occurs. He contrasts this with the compact nature of Europe but its fragmentation because of language, political and traditional barriers and poor organisation (his views on European communication were contested in the course of discussion). He looks at the authority and leadership role of the two national institutions of

North America (but does not compare them with European counterparts), the major differences in Europe and North America to the training of archivists, and notes that while North American archivists argue that there are no standards, he believes there is no lack of standards and manuals, just a lack of acceptance and use of a common practice.

His survey leads him to conclude that the American nexus between librarianship and archives management could be valuable because he sees European archivists as being increasingly isolated in this age of information management. He argues that European archivists need to emulate their North American counterparts and get involved in records management and that American ventures like RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) and OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) should indicate that a European automated archival database of holdings is possible.

Blouin looks at divergences in tradition (focusing on text and language, archival law and education and training), systemic differences and divergences in roles past and present.

His North American perceptions, outlined in the introductory section of his essay, are interesting, and perhaps familiar, to many of us — “Europe had, I thought, real archives” (p. 22) and “I had a sense that archives were important in Europe” (p. 22).

Blouin contrasts the quantity of pre-modern archives in the custody of European archives with the relatively homogenous holdings of North American archives. This early material in unfamiliar forms, hands and languages requires training in diplomatics and a preoccupation with provenance. It means that archivists are “the interpreters of documents not simply a gatekeeper between the user and the location of a document” (p. 24). It also means that archival programs and archival training are probably skewed (in terms of emphasis, resources and recognition) in favour of pre-modern archives to the detriment of modern archives.

Generally speaking it is far more common for archival legislation to exist in European countries, for it to be uniform and for it to be comprehensive and detailed. National legislation in North America varies, legislation in states is patchy in America and virtually non-existent at the local level. However, Blouin does not follow through with whether this has made any material differences to the management of archives.

Blouin argues that while current divergences exist and can be documented, within fifty years there will be convergence. This convergence will be brought about by the sheer volume of documentation produced by modern society and by problems posed by electronic records. The common tradition, that he believes will be

established, will integrate technology with archival practice, will re-think the definition of information, will require archivists to understand the nature of large organisations and will find a variety of ways to create public awareness and improve resource allocation.

### **Session 2 — Archival Typology**

Hans-Dieter Kreikamp and Carol Couture presented typologies or classifications of archival institutions in Europe and North America respectively. Kreikamp's is a fairly general essay looking at centralised and decentralised archival systems, touching on approaches to transfer and appraisal. Couture's typology for North American institutions relies on eight categories — national government institutions, regional government institutions, local government institutions, educational institutions, health care institutions, religious institutions, industries and business and socio-cultural and scientific institutions. Within each category he talks about its definition, organisation, contents and main distinctive elements. He then proceeds to discuss the general characteristics of the context in which North American institutions operate. The two essays help to explain something of the variety of institutions in North America and Europe but they do nothing to explore whether there are differences, what they are and whether they are important.

### **Session 3 — Archival Identity**

The third session of the Conference was devoted to archival identity. Gerard Ermisse's paper concentrates on the identity of the European archivist; Helen Samuels' focuses on North American archival identity. Ermisse contends that the image of archivists in Europe has changed for the better, that there is a new breed of archivist brought about by new areas of employment and that archivists are embarking on new areas of activity. The range of professional training and professional organisations is described and their importance is asserted but not really analysed or discussed. Helen Samuels' approach is to define the nature of modern institutions, of modern documentation and the role of the modern archivist. From that springboard she argues that archivists need three components of knowledge — knowledge of archival techniques, of the nature of archives and of the nature of institutions. She argues that these components define and distinguish archivists. She concludes that the profession and archival educators must identify how to convey these components.

### **Session 4 — Technology and Archives**

The last session of the Conference provided participants with a "snapshot" of the application of technology in different settings. Anne

MacDermaid reported on a survey of the way computers are used in forty-four Canadian archives; William Wallach introduced the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN); Boris Kaptelov described the application of computers in Soviet archives (text of full paper not published); and Charles Dollar talked about the Optical Digital Image Storage System (ODISS) being trialled by NARA.

### Recommendations

The Conference concluded by making six recommendations to ICA. The recommendations related to the planning of future conferences; to the need for advanced professional development; to the development of the discipline of modern diplomatics; to the need for increased standardisation of information technology in archives; sought that projects be undertaken in Europe with a view to accelerating the development of internationally applicable technological improvements and indicated that European archival administrations and professional organisations should assist with the implementation of the recommendations.

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*Fourth Expert Consultation on RAMP (RAMP IV) Chinchon (Spain) 6 to 9 October 1989 Final Report.* Paris. UNESCO General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1989. PGI-90/WS/10. Gratis. (Available from UNESCO, Division des services d'Information, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 757 Paris, France).

Regular readers of this section of *Archives and Manuscripts* will be familiar with the various RAMP studies which have been reviewed in recent issues (10 in the period 1989-1990, 3 in this issue). In all there have been more than 70 of these studies produced by the RAMP program and topics have ranged over the full ambit of archival and records management responsibilities including survey, appraisal, access, preservation, conservation, repography, audio-visual records, machine-readable records, oral history, preparation of guides, physical security, repository storage, pest management, curriculum development, archival education and professional associations.

While RAMP III was held in Helsinki in 1986, RAMP IV was attended by sixteen experts at Chinchon, Spain in 1989. These experts are invited by UNESCO to attend in their "personal capacity", to review progress and set targets for the coming triennium. In Spain the experts included Mr. Frank Evans, the originator of RAMP, other experts attending from such countries as France, Germany, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Canada, Spain, Colombia and Trinidad/Tobago.

The experts discussed changes which had occurred within the profession and within archival and records management services since RAMP III, in particular the valued movement of archivists into the records management field seen to be happening primarily in "developing countries". The report comments,

"Where the value of records management in improving administration was being recognised, the relationship of archivists to administrators was more important than their relationship to other information professionals. However, elsewhere their cultural role was being seen as of increasing importance in the light of the general development of awareness of the value of the national documentary heritage and of the archivist's role in preserving and conserving it."

The consultation also concluded that, in the audio-visual field, the profession of archivist did not really exist, with amateurs heavily involved. The impact of new technologies on archives and the education and training of archivists were other topics of discussion.

An evaluation of RAMP activities to date was made with experts concluding that the re-orientation called for by RAMP III in favour of more operational projects had been achieved and that the program had assisted in the geographical spread and development of archival and records management infrastructures, noting the vital cooperation between ICA and UNESCO.

The section *RAMP studies and guidelines* was of more than passing interest to me as Book Reviews Editor of *Archives and Manuscripts*. Of the 14 RAMP studies reviewed by this journal in recent issues few have been uncritical. While Australian reviewers have been supportive of the aim of these studies, nevertheless they have found a significant number of them wanting. These reviewers have been drawn from a wide range of archival institutions across Australia and have included "expert" conservators and archivists. Several have discussed their professional misgivings with these publications with the Book Reviews Editor. Phrases such as "useful but", "many shortcomings", "doubtful recommendations", "alarming suggestion", "limited value", "disappointing", are not uncommon in the published Australian reviews. RAMP IV noted "Reviews, which were now beginning to appear in professional journals, were also in general favourable."

Was this just another self-congratulatory comment or did the Australian reviews differ significantly from those in other professional journals? A survey of recent issues to hand of both *Archivaria* and *American Archivist* revealed fewer studies had been reviewed, although the number may increase in 1990 issues not available as yet. These reviews were less critical than those appearing in *Archives and Manuscripts*, although the titles were not common. However, two *American Archivist* reviews were in the critical category.

In the Australian reviews the conservation-type publications have

attracted most criticism. This is not too surprising as early Australian Conservators with European training had to learn to adapt traditional methods to suit new world materials and climate. Two decades further on Australian conservators and archivists have developed new strategies to deal with particular problems resultant from our heritage and geographical location which may indeed have more relevance to some developing countries than traditional European techniques.

The consultation concluded with recommendations for future action. It was agreed that the next stages of RAMP should focus on the following fields of activity: infrastructure development; training and education; protection of the heritage; information technologies; research in archival theory and practice. The development of the international microfilm program for the reconstitution of the archival heritage of development countries was also mentioned with satisfaction.

An interesting "state of the union" type report with a strong propaganda flavour. It could well have been written prior to the meeting.

Nevertheless, I look forward to receiving additional RAMP publications for review as they become available.

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**D. W. G. Clements et al.** *Review of training needs in conservation and preservation.* Paris. UNESCO, General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1989. 32 pp. PGI-89/WS/15. Gratis.

**Patricia Chapman,** *Guidelines on preservation and conservation policies in the archives and libraries heritage.* Paris: UNESCO, General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1990. 40 pp. PGI-90/WS/7. Gratis. (Available from UNESCO, Division des services d'Information, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.)

These are two publications in the series produced by UNESCO under its General Information Programme as part of its long term Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP). A number of RAMP studies have already been produced, some of which have been reviewed in this journal. RAMP publications are usually low budget, single section, soft-covered documents photographically reproduced from the author's text. The RAMP program is particularly aimed at meeting the needs of developing countries. It has, however, been responsible for producing some very worthwhile studies in the preservation and conservation of library and archival materials which can be applied to both developing and developed countries alike.

The first document analyses the results of a review of the training

needs in preservation and conservation for libraries and archives and makes recommendations for future actions. The survey itself was undertaken as a UNESCO funded review of library and archive schools and of institutions employing conservators. Coverage was worldwide, although the United Kingdom and North America were excluded because they have been studied previously. This report was compiled from answers to questionnaires, with two different questionnaires being used for schools and for employing institutions.

Although, in the *Introduction*, preservation is defined as including both the “hands on” treatment and the more elusive subject of “preservation management”, the report generally places more emphasis on the former rather than the latter. This is unfortunate, because it is easier to consider simple conservation techniques, in the longer term it is by increasing an awareness of preservation management that will lead to far greater rewards in terms of both the quality and the quantity of material preserved.

The survey of teaching institutions showed that there was a certain amount of general overview or “consciousness raising” type teaching of preservation, with archival courses devoting more time to this subject than library courses. Topics covered included preservation and conservation, environmental control, disaster preparedness and the use of microfilming. Only a few courses include “hands on” work — generally simple treatments and repairs. The qualifications of staff to teach preservation was not rated highly, “theoretical awareness in teaching staff is frequently well ahead of any practical knowledge or activity being undertaken”. However, there was a strong awareness among the schools that further training for staff was needed.

The questions and answers for the employing institutions particularly seemed to be slanted more towards the “hands on” aspects of preservation rather than to preservation management, which I found rather disappointing. Although the results of the survey followed inevitably from the questions asked, even the authors of the report noted that “neither archives nor libraries gave much prominence to the place of conservation within the whole collection management framework”. This, of course, is something that is also true in Australia, even though there has been some significant progress towards integrating preservation into mainstream management in certain key organisations.

The report highlights that there is a large gap between expectations and reality where archival and library preservation is concerned. Increased access to training, both for teaching staff in schools and for employees in institutions is seen as essential. Basically, all the recommendations in the report would go some way — if implemented — to closing the gap. Most of the recommendations involve financial



commitment: grants for overseas training in preservation and conservation; grants for training of teachers; workshops; extra resources for existing courses; international seminars. In the current world economic climate they are probably doomed to failure. The ideal would be to devise innovative, low cost programs which could be implemented with minimum financial commitment.

Coincidentally, the second document, *Guidelines on preservation and conservation policies in the archives and libraries heritage*, does provide a very valuable model for helping institutions develop their own preservation programs, and probably could also be used to devise courses in library and archive schools. Except for a few minor quibbles, this is an eminently sensible work, full of good information that can be used as a basis for a very rational and workable preservation plan. It is concise, clear, and the advice it offers is generally both practical and realistic. It does not set out to be prescriptive, as so many documents do, but rather offers "to define a set of guidelines which can be selectively applied according to the needs of collections in a variety of institutions" realising that preservation policy "must take full account of the aims and objectives of the institution, the needs of the users and the place of the collection or repository within a local, regional, national or even international framework". Perhaps even more importantly, it points out that any preservation plan must fit in with the resources of the institution. Any organisation should not feel inferior because it cannot treat all material, or because it does not keep all material in optimum environmental conditions. An organisation should not be too ambitious, and the most important part of the implementation process is to set priorities so that resources can be allocated according to need.

The commonsense approach of this author to preservation planning is one that should have widespread adoption. In a brief 26 pages of well laid out text, it covers the main elements of a preservation plan including:

- preventive measures to minimize deterioration;
- housekeeping routines;
- staff and user training;
- security measures, including disaster control;
- protective measures, boxing, etc.;
- substitution and reprographic procedures;
- conservation treatments;
- disposal programs;
- exhibition and loans procedures.

My one major disagreement with its recommendations is its insistence on fairly limited environmental controls for temperature,

humidity and light exposure. For example, to state that temperatures should be maintained at 16-21°C might be desirable and even achievable in temperate climates but is generally very expensive to maintain in tropical conditions. It would be far better to emphasise stability and passive environmental control, with absolute limits omitted. (In fact, of course, ideal conditions for storage for most paperbased collections would involve a temperature much less than even 16°C).

The work also includes a good six-page bibliography, incorporating most of the definitive current writings on preservation management issues, without padding it out with other less relevant references. I would recommend that all institutions involved with developing preservation policies obtain and read this work.

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**Alan Horder** *Guidelines for the Care and Preservation of Microforms in Tropical Countries*, Paris. UNESCO. General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1990. 20 pp., PG-90/WS/17. Gratis. (Available from UNESCO, Division des services d'Information, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.)

UNESCO's RAMP series of publications are written with the particular needs of developing countries in mind. The aim of these studies is to facilitate the transfer of specialised knowledge, assist in formulating development policies, and introduce minimum standards, rules and recommendations. The study being reviewed is concerned with providing a framework for the care and preservation of microforms in tropical countries (some of which are "developing") and it does so within an awareness that both high levels of humidity and/or temperatures as well as limited resources add to the difficulties of maintaining microform collections to archival standards.

Within this context the development of a realistic policy aimed at the care and preservation of microforms becomes vitally important. The monograph is only twenty pages long and is divided into fifteen sections. Topics covered include: types of microform materials, required useful life, processing, hazards, handling, storage and enclosures, inspection and protection against natural and man-made disasters. The publication provides a 14-point summary of guidelines and a glossary of terms used. It is clearly inexpensive to produce and therefore easy to update and amend. There is however no bibliography or list of recommended reading apart from the list of ISO recommendations referred to throughout the text.

The booklet is useful but it is not the final word. It does provide a concise summary of recognised standards in relation to the processing, management, protection and control of a microform collection, but for the institution in the process of establishing a comprehensive microfilm program or attempting to set up systems in order to manage new microform acquisitions, more detailed literature will need to be consulted.

The two appendices will be of interest to those who need to keep an eye on the latest developments. In Appendix A *The root causes of silver image deterioration* the author refers to recent research which may lead to "a redefinition of archival processing" for silver-gelatine film. This research concludes that silver image deterioration may have more to do with moisture, pollution and poor quality enclosures and does not entirely result from improper washing and fixing.

Appendix B *The use of hermetically sealed pouches to store microfilms* suggests that the technology of food packaging in sealed aluminium foil pouches may be useful in the long-term storage of microforms, particularly in situations in which air-conditioning systems are non-existent or at best inconsistent. The author suggests that "the expense of an air-conditioning system and its perpetual upkeep are replaced by the much smaller expense of a desk-top vacuum-seal packaging machine, nitrogen cylinders and a supply of pouches". An investigation into the potential of this technology for microform storage in developing countries is underway.

However, good intentions and knowledge of the latest research are irrelevant in situations where archives and libraries are forced to compete for funding from very limited resources. In situations such as these, the author concedes,

"... activities directed at the care and preservation of microforms must be planned with the utmost realism, and priorities established so that, even if preservations of *all* the microforms in a library or archive cannot be achieved, the preservation for posterity of *irreplaceable records* is assured."

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Sue Garland, editor, *Approaches to Problems in Records Management: III Financial Records*. RM A3:1990. Society of Archivists, Records Management Group (UK), 1990. 49 pp. ISBN 0 902886 36 3. £10.50 (available from D. Lamb, Hampshire Record Office, 20 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EF, UK).

A problem often encountered by a records management practitioner is the appraisal and determination of retention periods for large classes of record. Some of the most common classes would have to be financial

records. This publication records the proceedings of a seminar held in November 1989 on the topic of approaches to problems in managing financial records.

The speakers canvass the issues, and the problems, suggesting strategies in a clear and uncomplicated manner. Indeed, the general aim of the publication seems to be to provide for the general reader who wants to know "how to do it" rather than an in depth philosophical debate on the issues.

Each speaker has approached the subject from a different perspective, thus providing the reader with a well-rounded approach from which to tackle the problems. The definition of financial records is interesting as it incorporates a wide range of records likely to be found in an organisation. Hence, included are personnel and assets management records as well as the more traditional financial records.

This publication would be a useful guide to both the experienced and inexperienced. Refreshingly short on jargon, it provides good advice on how to get started, how to undertake a survey and factors to take into account when determining appraisal action on records which have strong legal and audit links. The only aggravation is the discussion on storage mediums, for the same views are presented more than once, by different speakers. However, but this is only a minor irritation.

The publication's greatest benefits are its simplicity and its further application to many other areas beyond financial records. Its practical approach provides a useful model for anyone associated with appraising records.

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**Department of Administrative Services, *A Guide to the Use of Recycled Paper*. Canberra. AGPS, 1990. 88 pp. ISBN 0 644 11859 8. \$9.95.**

This *Guide* is a response to a society that is constantly demanding an environmentally friendly approach by government. The environment and man's adverse impact upon it is one of the major issues in the 1990s. Far from moving towards a paperless office we appear to be swamped by an ever-increasing mountain of paperwork, so consequently the use of recycled paper needs to be carefully assessed.

The publication arose out of a review within the Department of Administrative Services regarding the ". . . *potential for using products made from recycled paper and to advise on improving paper waste recycling practices*". The Department of Administrative Services provided the ideal vehicle for the review, being a large paper user, and also having the resources and facilities to make an adequate assessment

of recycling potential. The Review examined the current position in Australia, with a comparison of governmental action in each State and a survey of activity in other countries.

*A Guide to Recycled Paper* is a mixture of technical details, administrative summary and forward planning. Chapter 2 contains the Review's recommendations. Some of these are generalised policy statements, others are specific recommendations for the applications of recycled paper. The Review also details those publications and documents for which recycled paper is unsuitable. It is emphasised that an important aspect in encouraging the use of recycled paper is ensuring the identification and labelling of paper in regard to its recycled content. Overall Chapter 2 presents the Commonwealth Government's manifesto in regard to recycled paper, setting specific policy directions and objectives for various branches of the Commonwealth Public Service to follow.

A brief summary of the Australian Pulp and Paper Industry is contained in Chapter 3, outlining ownership, consumption and industry products. A simple description of the paper-making process, an outline of the important properties of paper, and a summary of various types of paper are a helpful part of this publication as a basic introduction to the topic. This publication contains a short but useful glossary which standardises the use of terms in relation to paper products in Australia. An interesting addition to the Guide is the inclusion of a costing table providing percentage price increase for recycled paper equivalent for various categories of paper products. *A Guide to Recycled Paper* explores but does not resolve one of the central issues — a definition of "recycled paper". The Department of Administrative Services puts forward its view of the elements to be considered in developing a definition for general application by the Commonwealth.

As a publication on its own the *Guide* does not provide the specific detail relating to the properties of paper that many archivists require, these are supplied by the Australian Archives Specifications flowing from the *Guide*. The *Guide* together with these specifications "*Papers for Use in Records*" provide valuable information and technical details for all concerned institutions in Australia. The Department of Administrative Services is quite correct when it says the *Guide* "... will be an invaluable reference tool".

The publication adequately fulfils its function to "... help people who buy paper products and those who are educating others about the practical day-to-day uses of recycled paper". While the publication is very much the summary of recommendations of a government review, the subject matter ensures that it has a much wider impact. The

inclusion of comprehensive appendices add to the *Guide's* potential as a useful reference source.

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\*Editor's Note: These two reviewers are successive occupants of the position of Records Manager, at the University of Queensland, each being the occupant at the time their review was written.

**Victoria. Public Record Office, *Digest of the Public Records of Victoria*. Melbourne. Department of Property and Services, Government of Victoria, 1990. 99 pp.**

I received this book for review, with considerable interest, as the production of guides for the National Archives of Papua New Guinea, is very much on my mind at present. I did wonder if I could do justice to the review since the very first line states "This *Digest* is ancillary to the PRO's *Summary Guide*" and I do not have access to the latter.<sup>1</sup> I wanted to read the *Digest* anyway, so if I have missed some points through lack of the *Summary Guide*, I apologise. Much thought has gone into the text of this *Digest* to explain to the researcher the environment in which required records may be found. Attention is drawn to the fact that PROV does not, and can not, stand alone, that it is inter-dependent with other institutions, and why this is so. The *Digest* in fact, says which other institutions may be profitably consulted for certain records which are not at PROV.

The introduction, which is longer than Parts 1, 2 and 3 put together, takes us through using the *Digest* and the *Summary Guide*, then explains in detail what are record items, record series, consignments, agencies, and record groups. The text is accompanied by full page charts illustrating the main components of the PRO record control system, a sample inventory of series, a sample inventory of agencies and some relationships in the PRO control system. The charts are all useful and I had no trouble following the explanations in the text.

Although the *Digest* is ancillary to the *Summary Guide*, the *List of Holdings*, which is gradually being superseded by the *Summary Guide* is also referred to. The point is well made, that information documented in these publications, although as accurate as possible, can always be extended or modified by further research, and comments would also be welcomed in order to improve future editions.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 are all quite short. Part 1, *How to use the Public Record Office* describes the physical arrangement and is accompanied by an illustrative chart showing the inter-relationship of the finding aids. I like the fine detail: where the finding aid is a volume, a volume is drawn, where the format is of cards or loose leaves, such are drawn etc., with instructions in a different kind of box. The *Numerical Inventory*

(Part 2) is simply the 96 Record Groups VRG1-VRG96 listed in that order and the *Classified Inventory* (Part 3) relists the same in A: *Non-Ministerial Groups* and B: *Ministerial Groups*. Two pages of space could possibly have been saved here by inserting an extra column in Part 2 which indicated to which of the two classes, each record group belongs.

Alternatively, in the classified inventory, the Records Groups could have been rearranged within the classes, alphabetically, thus becoming a quick reference to the record groups without the need to refer to the index, to which I will refer below.

Part 4, *Chronological Inventory of Record Groups*, I found quite fascinating, an excellent administrative history, with four phases of administration, Great Britain, New South Wales, Victoria and Commonwealth of Australia clearly explained and delineated. Each section not only gave the historical perspective, but indicated what records existed either in general terms for other places, or by giving in the case of Victoria, lists of relevant records groups relating to segments of that history.

Part 5, *Status Report (Research Note) on the Record Group*, is the longest part of the whole. After a short introduction, each VRG is described, in numerical order. The Record Group is put into historical perspective with short notes on functions and availability. The descriptions vary quite considerably in length. Interspersed are six charts showing relationships between groups of functions. These are all very clearly drawn.

Part 6 is the *Alphabetical Inventory (Index)* which is of all Record Group titles as well as key words in those titles, and selected functions. It appears to be fairly comprehensive.

As one who considers that every publication should be a work of art, I have to say that this is not. I have no information whether it is a "give-away" publication, or will be sold, if the former, then cost of production could well be paramount. However, it would not have cost any extra to pay a little more attention to style and to be more variable with type face.

The type face is uniformly heavy — a gothic print, to which I am normally drawn myself. This example is so heavy, that the bold and italic variations can barely be distinguished. A further refinement would have been variation in size of headings, much greater than the result. It is therefore not easy to glance through and jump to the next section, or even to decide whether you have completed reading a part or a section.

The style is crowded — margins too narrow all round, no more space between a section, or even a chapter than between two paragraphs. There is almost no indentation. Headings of sections frequently start

almost at the bottom of a page when an extra line between sections could have tastefully started the new section at the top. The style of quotations from other publications, particularly pages 20-23, is old fashioned, with double quotation marks on the margin at beginning of each paragraph. Indentation and in smaller or lighter type looks much more attractive. In the quotations there are also a number of typographical errors, mainly lack of spaces between words or spaces in the middle of words, which I doubt were in the original. Certainly in the main text the proof reading is excellent.

The index style too could have been improved with a little extra attention. Titles of VRGs are in capitals while functions are in lower case — that is good and plain. However, in the alphabetical sequence of the index, a functional term precedes the VRG entry for the same term (i.e. *arts*, lower case, precedes *ARTS VRG 61*, upper case) with related terms often interposed. To me the VRG entry should logically come first being the more important. Where entries continue on a second line, frequently (not always) the second line is not indented thus interrupting the alphabetical order on the margin. Subdivisions of a heading are quite well indented by contrast.

Perhaps the overcrowding was necessary to keep the publication under 100 pages, which it does at 99 pages. Although a soft cover, the binding seems adequate and strong.

Quibbles about style aside, the content of the *Digest* is excellent. It is the kind of publication of which everyone of our Archives needs more. It has not only informed me of the richness of Victoria's heritage, it has inspired me to try to do as well here — certainly it has given me some good ideas. I commend the effort and devotion of the staff who have researched and produced this *Digest*.

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1. Editor's Note: An advance copy of the *Digest* was received from the Keeper in June 1990. A copy of the *Summary Guide* was received for review in mid-January 1991 after the copy deadline for the issue. It was immediately sent to the same reviewer for advice. She speedily provided a second review. An unexpected delay in publishing schedules enabled the second review to be included in this edition.

**Victoria Public Record Office, *Summary Guide to the Public Records of Victoria*. Melbourne. Archival Heritage Programme, Public Record Office, Department of Property and Services, Government of Victoria. 1990. 21 pp. (microfiche).**

This guide arrived for review some weeks after I had sent in the review for its companion volume *Digest of the Public Records of*



*Victoria* in which I noted my lack of access to this volume. I am left a little puzzled now as to why two separate publications are needed; they could surely be combined into one slightly larger volume as some of the information, notably the index to Record Groups, which takes up ten pages in the *Digest* and eighteen in the *Summary Guide*, is almost identical. I say almost, because in fact the *Digest* index has a few more entries than the same in the *Summary Guide* suggesting it was prepared for publication later.

In spite of this, my criticisms of the style of the *Digest*, including the index, do not apply to the style of the *Summary Guide* which is much more superior, indeed it is the work of art I was looking for, especially the cover, which is an excellent photo of a variety of records. The print type face is the same, but the production is lighter and thus the bold headings are much clearer, and they do vary in size. It is also easier to read because there are double columns to each page, which were lacking in the *Digest*. The *Digest* is A4 size, larger than the B5 size of the *Summary Guide*, another puzzle, as an ancillary volume should surely be the same format. The diagrams in the *Summary Guide* are set out beautifully and clearly.

Information in the *Summary Guide* which is *not* in the *Digest* includes information about Access and Freedom of Information and ten extra figures which explain the parts of the information on the fiche in greater detail. There is also an alphabetical index to agencies of which I could find no fault. The last page explains how to use the microfiche which are in a pocket in the back cover. I tested these out and they are detailed copies of printed guides to each record group and each agency, in the same format as the *Summary Guide*.

The preliminary information, though not duplicating the information in the *Digest*, nevertheless is background which cannot be avoided when each has to arrive at the same point — how the records are structured, and how to find your way to using them. They seem to have been written quite separately and independently of each other.

I do congratulate the Public Records Office of Victoria for this production. I hope that the *Digest* is a preliminary edition and that the next will be similar in format to the *Summary Guide*, and it would be even better if it was a combined volume.

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**Andrew Forell and Maryanne McCubbin**, *The Records of Victorian Trades Hall Council: First Accession (1857-1988), List and Indexes. Volumes 1 and 2*. Carlton. University of Melbourne Archives and Victorian Trades Hall Council, 1989. 64 pp. ISBN 0 9 58846 2 5. \$20

(available from The University of Melbourne Archives, 119 Barry Street, Carlton, Vic. 3053).

At first sight this is a very daunting work. Open at virtually any page and you will be confronted by more numbers than words. But once the mysteries of listing and indexing are penetrated, this is a valuable guide indeed.

It lists the extant records of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (THC) from its inception through to the early 1970s. Further work is planned on records covering the 1970s onwards.

For researchers, of course, the most interesting aspect of these two volumes is the indexing. Extremely comprehensive indexes by subjects, persons, and trade unions/shop committees provide the way in to the 420 boxes of records. Even by themselves, these indexes give a fascinating overview of the concerns and activities of the THC.

As might be expected, the records give a thorough account of the bread-and-butter activities of trade unionism — wages and working conditions. The value of this for labour historians looking at the life of particular unions, or following the fortunes of a particular industrial campaign, goes without saying.

Given the internal struggles inside the Victorian THC (especially the period 1967-1973 when twenty-seven “rebel unions” split off from the THC), greater accessibility of its records through this guide can only assist those examining the conflict that exists within the trade union movement.

But it could be mistaken to limit the usefulness of this material to such a narrow area. As even a cursory examination of the subject index shows, these records provide an invaluable resource for anyone interested in issues associated with broader social movements, such as the oppression of women, or the destruction of the environment.

It is all too often forgotten these days that the trade union movement has been in the forefront of struggle around these issues: hence the numerous entries on equal pay, women, childcare, or on the environment, green bans and nuclear energy. The considerable amount of material on the Victorian THC's campaign against the building of the polluting Newport power station provides the basis for a fascinating case study of these questions.

In fact, researchers interested in all sorts of social history, from capital punishment to censorship, to opposition to tyranny in various countries will find something in the deliberations of the Victorian THC. Even those whose concerns are with the more esoteric aspects of social history will find a reflection in the trade union movement, via entries such as “Esperanto” and “Total Abstinence Society”!

On the negative side, entries like “anti-Chinese league”, “Chinese

Restriction Act", "coloured labour" and "coolies" point us to the anti-Asian racism from which the union movement was not immune.

The index to trade unions and shop committees provides a valuable research tool on an area of Australian industrial relations research that is quite weak. Very little material exists on workplace unionism, either in the form of shop committees or shop steward organisation more generally. By providing a list of different shop committees, and other references to shop stewards, these two volumes will be of assistance to researchers trying to fill this gap.

From a user's point of view, there are a few problems with the organisation of this guide to the Victorian THC's records. The lack of an introductory explanation of the structure of the guide creates a few difficulties. It would have been improved by a simple statement that it consists of four sections: a listing of the records, and three indexes — trade unions and shop committees; subjects; persons. Similarly, volume 2 begins with a reference back to the "beginning of index to trade unions and shop committees". The addition of the words "on page 65" would have made using the index just a little easier.

Nonetheless, these problems can be easily overcome by the user upon a brief examination of the two volumes.

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**Robert Lawrie**, *Guide to the Archives of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Part 2 of the Guide to the Archives of the New South Wales Parliament*. New South Wales Parliamentary Archives. 1988.

**Robert Lawrie**, *Guide to the Archives of the New South Wales Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works 1888-1930, Part 7 of the Guide to the Archives of the New South Wales Parliament*. New South Wales Parliamentary Archives. 1987. ISBN 0 7305 4785 X (set).

Both of these guides set archival practice within the historical context of the records. It is refreshing that the archives of the New South Wales Parliament are independent of the Executive Government, under Westminster principles, and that the archives of the legislature over twenty-five years old are available for research at Parliament House. The publication of a complete *Guide to the Archives* is very valuable to users and is an aim which few Archives/Public Records Offices have achieved. The plan is to produce nine parts, with preliminary lists being published first. The records of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council form the majority of records. Joint Departments such as Buildings Manager, Associations of Members, Parliamentary Standing Committees and private papers of members are peripheral by comparison.

The *Guide to the Archives of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales* (Part 2, 1988) is a masterly and practical guide for both the officers of Parliament and research workers accessing the records. The Introduction (pages 31 to 43) explains the constitutional basis of the New South Wales Parliament, the electoral franchise, payments to members, Parliamentary terms, sessions, speakership, administrative arrangements within the Parliament, and the history of the establishment of the archives. The rescue of the records of the first Legislative Council (1824-1855), the papers of the National Australasian Convention of 1891 and the Australasian Convention of 1897-1898 were significant. A particularly worthwhile section of the Guide is that on Citations of archival Parliamentary records to assist users.

The Guide is divided into three sections on the description of the records — the Chambers record series, Office record series, and appendices of item lists of a small number of series. The descriptions (pages 53 to 105) explaining the Parliamentary process add to the routine descriptions of the archival series. No doubt many valuable records were destroyed in the late nineteenth century and as a result of Premier Carruthers' resolution of 6 December 1905. The role of New South Wales Historians and Librarians in forming the Archives Department within the Mitchell Library in 1914 retrieved the situation somewhat. However, the type of Parliamentary records still held by the Mitchell Library in 1988 are not specified (p. 40) which is an omission.

Henry Parkes' concern for accountability in the expenditure of public money quoted at the beginning of the *Guide to the Archives of the New South Wales Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works 1888-1930* has a familiar tone. Parkes' bill formalised the traditional Westminster principle of Parliamentary control over expenditure of public funds. The Joint Committee of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly which operated from 1888 to 1930 (and has never been formally abolished) investigated and reported on all public works with estimated costs over twenty thousand pounds sterling. The booming economic conditions in the 1880s saw public expenditure on rail and bridge development projects escalate. The housing of the Committee in the Public Works Department exposed it to departmental influence and Parliamentary criticism. The party system of the twentieth century enabled the Committee to be controlled by the Executive, effectively removing the debate on public works from the floor of Parliament.

The records comprise nineteen series which are each described and items listed where relevant. The principal series illuminating the workings of the Committee and its deliberations are the Minute Books 1888-1930, copies of letters sent 1888-1930, letters received 1889-1929 and Papers regarding the proposed works. The index to place

names in the titles of printed reports (i.e. in *Parliamentary Papers*) and a list of relevant legislation are especially useful to researchers.

The inexpensive in-house copying and stapling of the books does not detract from the achievement of the publication.

Ruth S. Kerr

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**Nick Vine Hall**, compiler. *Parish Registers in Australia: A list of all known Originals, Transcripts, Microforms and Indexes of Australian Parish Registers, 2nd Edition*. Middle Park. Nick Vine Hall, 1990. ISBN 0 959 7208 4 7. \$19.95. (Available from N. Vine Hall, 25 Mills Street, Victoria 3200.)

Research into family history is alive and well in Australia, that is, going by the success of the first edition of this book, which has sold out. The result is the appearance of this much expanded version. Coverage has been increased by inclusion of nearly 3000 more registers held by an extra 50 record centres.

What is the attraction in compiling lists? Nick Vine Hall says that he has always been a collector, hence his tenacity in continuing to update his information.

In 1989 he surveyed "on a national basis, the existence and location of original and duplicate church parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, which have occurred in Australia. The survey is far from complete, but it is still growing" (p. 7). The second edition follows the pattern of listing "historical" pre-1900 parish registers, but the rule followed in this edition is "the ancient document rule" including all known registers which are at least thirty years old — more than one generation.

Using this guide it is possible to establish within a few minutes the location of particular parish registers. Also to find whether any indexes are available. In other words, like the well-known advertisement "let your fingers do the walking" and save some of the associated search costs, such as telephone calls and professional genealogist's fees.

Notes and comments aid the researcher in locating and understanding the information.

Nick Vine Hall plans (is compelled?) to keep collecting and collating information, so he appeals to all users of this guide to check out their own area and inform him of additional material, or corrections to be made.

Following my expressed interest in merinos as sources of family history, the author has pointed out a related comment — E.B.G. = Eaten By a Goat! Such interesting snippets of information

are found in the notes, adding to the entertainment of the not-so-serious reader. It is a time-saver for the serious researcher to the location (or rather non-location) of records.

A must for any serious researcher of genealogy — it is worth replacing that already out-of-date first edition.

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R. W. Home, editor, *Australian Science in the Making*. Melbourne. Cambridge University Press, 1988. 415 pp. ISBN 0521 35556. \$75. (Available from Cambridge University Press, 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Victoria 3166.)

Science is a complex discipline, of this we are all aware. It is very structured, full of terminology often only understandable to fellow scientists, and sparse in its use of words. The grasping of a specific discipline may take a lifetime of research.

The archivist responsible for the management of science-based archives therefore faces a difficult task, not only in storing the records — be they machinery, computer records, notes, treatises, the personal archives of a scientist, etc., but also in comprehending the material in order to facilitate/enhance future access to researchers. A core of published reference material, such as summary histories and journal articles, is therefore vital in assisting the archivist with this control.

Texts on the history of Australian science — a discipline only studied in earnest since the 1960s — are scarce, with Ann Moyal's *A bright and savage land — Scientists in Colonial Australia* (Collins, 1986) and the Royal Society of New South Wales' centenary volume of 1967 the only books coming to mind, with the *Historical Records of Australian Science Journal and Newsletter* continuing to make valuable contributions in this much neglected field. The book under review is therefore a welcome addition.

It must be pointed out that *Australian Science in the Making* is not a definitive history of Australian scientific endeavour. Rather, it is a collection of articles based around that topic, covering the period both before and after the white invasion of 1788. The articles on Aboriginal concepts of science are especially revealing. The text is chronologically divided into three parts: I. *Early Days*, II. *Science in a Colonial Society*, III. *Passage to Modernity*.

Topics discussed range from the role of Sir R. I. Murchison in fostering Australian science from England last century; through the impact of evolutionary theory; early industrial research by CSR (1855-

1900); the role of science in World War II; to a discussion of contemporary scientific institutions.

While the articles are often wordy and academic, they are also extremely well referenced and thoroughly indexed.

This book is highly recommended, along with Ann Moyal's text and the publications of the both the History of Australian Science project and Australian Science Archives Project, for the library of any archives dealing with indigenous science-based material.

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**William J. Breen**, editor, *Building La Trobe University: Reflections on the first 25 years, 1964-1989*. Melbourne. La Trobe University Press, 1989. ISBN 1 86324 003 9.

This book is what it claims to be, a series of reflections on the first 25 years of La Trobe University's existence. It is not a history, despite the prominent involvement of several of La Trobe's leading historians, and should not be judged as if it were. It is nevertheless legitimate to identify the gains and losses that have resulted from this selected approach.

On the positive side it has been possible to give the work great variety by including a large number of authors. The personal involvement of all the contributors has guaranteed a liveliness and freshness in the expression of opinion and judgement, and the authors have certainly been free to speak for themselves without editorial constraint to conform to a common argument or philosophy. They should all know what they are talking about, because they are talking mainly about themselves and their achievements, but it is the very authenticity and directness of their testimony that will cause readers a number of reservations.

The approach is autobiographical and anecdotal and some readers would probably have preferred an account that was more continuous, more detached and more objective. The multiplicity of authors has also meant a certain repetitiveness as some key events or developments are presented from a variety of perspectives.

Subjective reporting is undoubtedly a major problem. The writers are describing their own little or not so little contributions and some have a tendency to quote from themselves, or even to present bibliographies of their own publications. We are regaled with the triumphs of scientific research and the major publications from other sections of the University, and the note of self-congratulation is strongly sounded. Self-indulgence characterises the writings of both academic and student members of the University, and there is a certain

complacency about the account that this community gives of itself to the wider public.

This is a pity, because there are very important issues here, and there is enormous scope for the detached outsider to come in and pass external judgement on what has happened. The place of La Trobe within the wider Australian University scene; the clear indication that La Trobe has made a special contribution on equity issues; the nature of its student politics; the way in which the School and College concepts were undermined by the needs of traditional academic departments and other pressures; all these and many other matters suggest that La Trobe is worthy of very serious study and that a history of the University is an enterprise that must eventually be undertaken. Perhaps those involved in this project were wise to avoid the major exercise after only twenty-five years and to give us instead some of the primary source material on which the historian will eventually work.

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## ERRATUM

**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. P61-88/W5/16. Gratis.

This publication was reviewed in Volume 18 November 1990 Number 2 *Archives and Manuscripts* by James Elwing, Senior Conservator, Westpac Archives. The following paragraph should have appeared on p. 273 instead of the penultimate paragraph beginning, "Having been involved . . ."

In the volume supplied for review purposes, form C3 was missing. In so far as this form would contain the most important documentation on the condition of the collection, it makes evaluation of the survey forms impossible. If this is a major oversight in all copies, the reader may tend to make the same mistake I initially did, and assume form C2, for individual items, was to be used for this aspect of the entire survey.

The Book Reviews Editor wishes to apologise to both the reviewer and the author of the publication for this omission.