

# REVIEWS

Edited by Glenda Acland

## Publications

**Susan Burnstein, Vanessa Goodhew, Barbara Reed and Guy Tranter,** *Directory of Archives in Australia*. O'Connor, Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated, 1992. 544 pp. ISBN 0 947219 06 4. \$30 (\$25 ASA members) available from Australian Society of Archivists Inc, PO Box 83, O'Connor, ACT 2601).

I first saw this book among the publications on display at the ICA conference in Montreal last September. I had previously ordered a copy but it hadn't arrived by then. When the Reviews Editor asked me to review it for this journal, I was pleased to accept as I would then get a second copy (one for the office and one for home), but I was reluctant on two counts. First, my name appears among those thanked in the acknowledgements. Second, as an archivist, I am not really among the intended audience. However, the Reviews Editor reassured me, so read on.

I am not sure how many directories of this type have been produced in Australia. This one claims to be the third of its kind, and if 'of its kind' means a directory published by the ASA or its predecessor and purporting to cover all sorts of archives in Australia, then to my knowledge the claim is correct. But we must not overlook other, more specialised but no less valuable directories, such as the directory published some years ago by the Church Archivists' Society. Nor must we confuse this directory with more detailed guides to archival holdings such as the National Library's *Guide to Collections of Manuscripts Relating to Australia* or other more specialised guides such as those produced during International Women's Year.<sup>1</sup>

Which brings me to the question, what sort of directory is this? This question is probably best answered in reverse: what sort of directory is it not? It is not a directory to archival holdings. It will not tell you where you will find the papers of R.G. Menzies, the records of the Union Bank, or the registers of the old Bourke Gaol. It will tell you, however, where you can find the National Library of Australia and the ANZ

Banking Group Archives, when they are open, what their access arrangements are, and where to write or telephone. (It will not help you with the Bourke and District Historical Society, because it has no entry in the Directory — so the registers of the old Bourke Gaol are probably still in someone's garage.)

For a researcher, this is the value of this *Directory*. It tells him or her what institutions or organisations in Australia there are that accumulate or acquire archive and manuscript collections, where they are and how those collections can be accessed. And this is all it really purports to do. But this is not insignificant. Nowhere else can this information be easily acquired. Certainly there are guides to individual collections (such as those produced at regular intervals by the State Library of New South Wales) and guides to holdings such as the recent new edition of the *Concise Guide to State Archives of NSW* from the Archives Office of New South Wales, not to mention the ongoing work in the National Library of Australia to produce new volumes of its *Guide to Collections of Manuscripts Relating to Australia*. But these are updated only infrequently, if ever. In the meantime, custodial institutions change locations, telephone and fax numbers, change their names, merge, or even disperse their collections. This is where a directory like this comes into its own. It's up to date. Well, almost. But more up to date and comprehensive than anything else. Even when the *Guide to Manuscript Collections* goes online, who is going to ensure that this custodial information is updated?

The compilers have tried to collate a range of information: host institution, name of archives/manuscript unit, street and postal addresses, telephone and fax numbers, titles of officers responsible for management and for reference inquiries, services available hours of opening, conditions of access or use, acquisition focus (to give an idea of what might be found), overall quantity of material held, nature of holdings and sources of further information (such as general or specific guides). Information was sought by questionnaire, and naturally the institutions responding interpreted the questions differently. To make consultation easier for the reader, the compilers have obviously standardised the replies as far as they were able, but have, understandably, not embarked on any massive interpretation or analysis of the responses. And this accounts for some oddities. I cannot believe that Australian Archives houses, at its Central Office, 470,216 metres of records, or that Central Office offers any copying services to readers. The Central Office entry (useful so you know where to direct your complaints about matters of policy or your compliments on the excellent standard of service you have received at a regional office) should at the very least specifically direct readers to those regional offices which will provide services to readers. I also cannot believe that Australian Archives holdings of such magnitude are 99 per cent in-house, unless

the rate of records creation has increased substantially since my days there. Surely the bulk of the records are created by other Commonwealth government agencies and their predecessors. I could understand the 'in-house' reference if the host institution was described as 'Government of Australia', as it actually is for the Tasmanian Regional Office. Interestingly, most State archival institutions also claim that their holdings are mostly 'in-house', with the notable exception of the State Archives of Western Australia which only claims 1 per cent in-house (but perhaps that is part of claiming an entry in their own name and not under the Library and Information Service of WA).

What I find fascinating about this *Directory* is the amount of information it contains about the archival industry in Australia. This *Directory* provides an excellent snapshot of what would seem to be a growth industry. Unfortunately not all entries contain information about quantities held, but if you add up what's shown, it comes to a considerable amount, approaching three quarters of a million metres! And here we come to another apparent inconsistency. It seems strange that Australian Archives New South Wales Regional Office should hold 134,367 metres while the Archives Office of New South Wales holds only 33,000 metres. The only plausible explanation seems that the AONSW believes in counting only the material appraised as having permanent value, while AA has adopted the French definition of the word 'archives'.

It's interesting to speculate on the reasons for differences between what would seem to be similar institutions. Why, for example, does Cranbrook School have 100 metres of records, and the King's School 160 metres, while Abbotsleigh has only thirty metres. Or Guildford Grammar School has 350 metres? These differences cannot be simply explained by differences in the ages of the institutions — are there differences in collecting policies, or is the rate of accumulation affected by the sex of the pupil or the State where a school is located? I am also tempted to speculate on how much of a sinecure a full time job must be for a professional archivist who has only eighty metres of records in custody! What sort of an institution can afford that sort of luxury in this day and age?

The compilers have provided three indexes, and these are one of my main quibbles. They might have been better at the front of the book than at the back, with larger page headers. The first index is a name index. Given that the *Directory* entries are in alphabetical order, admittedly by State or Territory (why was Norfolk Island, or the other island territories for that matter, overlooked), there doesn't seem a great deal of point, unless there is an assumption that readers will not know in which State/Territory an institution is located. There would have been more point to this index if there had been more cross-referencing. At least the **Denis Wolanski Library and Archives of Per-**

forming Arts, Sydney Opera House is cross-referenced under **Sydney Opera House**, but shouldn't it also have been entered under **Performing Arts**, and **Wolanski** as well? Would not a researcher have found a reference under **Sydney** useful for **Council of the City of Sydney**?

The *Index by Place* also has some potential for confusion. The only entry under **Pymont** for example is **Westpac Banking Corporation**. Not only is no-one going to look under **Pymont** for this institution, I hope readers will be aware that any records Westpac is likely to have regarding Pymont would be very slim indeed: a researcher would be better off going to the **Council of the City of Sydney** (see **Rosebery**), the **Archives Office of NSW** (see **The Rocks**) or possibly to consult the records of the **Commonwealth Sugar Refining Co** (which I think are at the **Noel Butlin Archives, ANU** (see **Acton**). If the purpose of this index is to direct readers to collections likely to help their research about a particular locality, then I think the index is very misleading. If the purpose is to assist the reader determine places where research might be convenient, then it is also misleading, unless the reader in this case knows that Pymont is only a few minutes walk from the centre of Sydney. If this was the purpose of this index, it might have been better to lump all institutions within a metropolitan area under that area.

The third index is an *Index by Institution and Record Types*. This is an attempt to assist the reader find out which institutions might hold records relevant to her/his field of research. This sort of index is not easy to construct, as everyone has his/her own idea about classifying his/her collection. My main complaint about this index is that a list of the headings (there are only twenty-two) at the beginning would have been very useful. It's also a shame that some of the larger, more varied, collections weren't given more cross-references. For example, the **Noel Butlin Archives at ANU** appears under **Universities** (but I don't think it holds much in the way of university records), **Occupational and Professional Bodies** (it holds a lot of trade union records), but not under **Primary Industry** or **Secondary Industry** (it holds large quantities of records in these areas), nor is it listed under **Banking** (which is a pity because it holds Syd Butlin's papers, including all his research into Australian banking).

Everyone will find things they disagree with in this *Directory* — that's the nature of people (especially professionals) and this type of publication. But no-one can object to its publication or say that it won't be used extensively. It would be nice if it could be updated more frequently; its been nine years since the previous *Directory*. But that will require more work, and I strongly suspect that the current compilers (who I believe are voluntary) have had enough. Perhaps one day it might be possible to make it available online, so that it will always be up to date. When I was in Sydney in December last, I did manage to get all the compilers to autograph my copy of the *Directory*.

And this is because, in spite of anything you might think from what I've said above, I think they've done a marvellous job in eliciting all the information, putting it together and getting it out. Compiling a directory of this nature is usually a thankless task — it's always out of date the minute it appears and never looks like very much work. But it is a lot of hard work, and I think the archival profession and their clientele will be very glad they've done it. For this reader, it paints a very healthy picture of the archival industry in Australia, and brings a lot of friends closer. If you haven't got a copy yet, put this journal down and order one now.

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#### ENDNOTES

1. For example: **Janet Reed and Kathleen Oakes**, *Women in Australian Society, 1901-1945: A Guide to the Holdings of Australian Archives Relating to Women*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977, 121 pp. ISBN 0642 026327.

**André Vanrie**, editor-in-chief, *International Directory of Archives, Archivuum Vol. XXXVIII*. International Council of Archives. München. K.G. Saur, 1992. 411 pp. ISBN 3 598 21238 0. \$99 (including postage) (available from D. W. Thorpe, PO Box 146, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3206).

This publication has as its roots the *International Guide to Archives* published in 1934 under the auspices of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. The International Council on Archives took up this project in its early days and published a *Directory* in 1959. New revisions with further refinements to entries were published so that now we have the 1992 edition of the *International Directory of Archives*.

The growth in the number of repositories world-wide is the main driving force behind the continual updating of this *Directory*, as is the proliferation of national and thematic directories. As a consequence, this *Directory* had to be more concise to keep the publication at a manageable size. The editor notes in the preface that this may be the last edition in printed form as future updates would potentially be on disk.

Some countries' representatives did not reply to the questionnaire, and certainly geopolitical upheavals have had their effect. Nonetheless, 172 countries have entries in this *Directory*, as well as sixteen international organisations. Entries in the *Directory* for each country were supplied by 'national correspondents or by those assigned to the task by the respective National Archives'.

The *Directory* is clearly set out and easy to follow. In the front of the *Directory* the *Preface*, *Questionnaire*, and *Contents* are each repeated separately in five languages. Countries are referenced to page numbers under *Contents*. In the main body of the *Directory* each country is then listed alphabetically followed by its list of repositories. In the back is an *Index Locorum*, in English, with cities referenced to page numbers.

Languages used for entries vary and a country's entry may be in any one of the official languages of the International Council on Archives (English, French, Spanish, German and Russian) or in its own national language (Italian, Dutch). English and French languages dominate.

Five questions were asked in the questionnaire so each entry is necessarily brief with basic information. The questions asked were: 1. Name of Repository. 2. Address: actual address (and if necessary, postal address). 3. Telephone number and telefax number (if used). 4. Historical periods covered by the archives groups (by century). 5. Approximate linear measure (foot-run or meter-run) of shelving occupied.

The larger countries' entries are usually introduced by an explanatory note and/or a short bibliography, although there is no consistency in this aspect and many countries list their repositories with no introduction.

As well as a handbook for anyone interested in an overview of the world archival community, the *Directory* will be useful for researchers making their first selection of a repository. Addresses, phone and fax numbers have been listed and although some of these will quickly become (have already become) out-of-date, they provide a referral point.

As far as the number of entries for each country goes, there is great disparity. Some western European countries' repositories are listed in abundance. I was left wondering if the entries represent a very accurate comparative picture of each country's repositories. For example, Australia has forty-two repositories listed, New Zealand has ninety-four, the Republic of China has only thirty-two while Belgium has 169. The United States lists only Federal and State Archives while other large countries list far more categories.

Some countries list their archives under categories, some do not. For those who chose to use categories there is inconsistency in the names of the categories from country to country. For example, Canada has the category *Religious Archives* (a sub-category of *Private Archives*), the United Kingdom and Australia have the category *Ecclesiastical* as a category on its own. The New Zealand entry has a category *Art, Literature and Education*, Belgium has a category *Divers* and France has a category *Archives de Nature Speciale*. Australia has none of these categories but does have others such as *Other Private Archives*.

Evaluating the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the entries for each country in this *Directory* is difficult without a thorough knowledge of each country's archival community and holdings, so I decided to look at the Australian effort as a reflection of the comprehensiveness, consistency, and accuracy of the *Directory* as a whole.

For Australia the repositories are listed under the following categories: *Central Direction, Federal Archives, Regional Offices, Other Federal Institutions, National Library, State Archives, Local Administration, Universities, Libraries, Museums, Schools and Colleges, Other Private Archives, Ecclesiastical*. There are no categories for *Performing Arts, Media, or Business*, although these could have been included under *Other Private Archives*. The choice of the category *Ecclesiastical* is narrow. The term *Religious* is more hospitable to all religions.

Under the category *Ecclesiastical* only Roman Catholic archives are listed. No repositories for other denominations or religions are included. The National Library Manuscript Section is listed alone under the category *National Library*. Under *Schools and Colleges* there was only **one** entry. There are only **two** library repositories in Australia listed under the library category, **one** repository listed under the Museum category, **two** repositories listed under *Local Administration*, and **one** repository listed under the *Other Private Archives* category. When so few repositories in Australia were chosen to be listed I cannot understand why they needed to be broken up into so many small categories.

There are forty-two entries for repositories in Australia. In the new *Directory of Archives in Australia* there are 485 entries. Many of these entries would not have been suitable for entry in this *Directory*, however, the discrepancy speaks for itself.

Some important omissions have been made and there are some curious inclusions. The National and State repositories are well represented. Major repositories such as the Mitchell Library, the Noel Butlin Archives Centre and the University of Western Australia (to name a few) were not included, however, the Geelong Historic Records Centre is included. The University of Queensland Fryer Library is listed under *Universities*, but the University of Queensland Archives itself omitted.

An international directory is an important publication and an opportunity to show our archival 'wares'. The status of this publication warrants more care and attention to its entries and categories as it serves to make others aware of the richness of Australian repositories and helps us to see ourselves as part of a global community of archives. Let's hope that more of our repositories are included in the next edition.

I would have appreciated more editorial comment on how the information was gathered in each country, and on what the criteria were for inclusion of repositories and for choice of categories. There is little information on how the compilers approached their task. We do not know whether all repositories in each country were circularised with the questionnaire or if there were funds available to assist participating countries to gather information.

Overall, the mounting of such a publication is a daunting and ambitious task and all who were involved deserve thanks for having produced a practical and evolving reference tool. The failings are not in aspiration, but rather in implementation. As an example of world-wide cooperation it is an impressive achievement.

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ASA Directory Committee, 1990-1992

**Heather MacNeil**, *Without Consent: The Ethics of Disclosing Personal Information in Public Archives*. (Society of American Archivists Series, 2.) Metuchen NJ. Scarecrow Press, 1992. 230 pp. ISBN 0 8108 2581 3. US\$27.50 (available from the SAA or Scarecrow Press Inc, PO Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840, USA).

To my mind there are three threats to archivists and to the archives in their care. I call them the 'Archival Unholy Trinity', and they are: our inability or unwillingness to tackle the electronic records issue in a practical and timely way, the use of unstable media on which archives are being recorded (especially acid paper), and the insidious arguments of the privacy 'lobby'. My concern is despite personal views that computers are a wonderful thing that have done much to advance humankind, as well as a great sympathy to things 'Green'. In addition, like all of us I expect, I have skeletons in my cupboard that I would not like to see the general light of day.

I thought it was important to put these credentials on the record before launching into my review of this book. It is based on Heather MacNeil's Master of Archival Studies thesis (and note the difference in the main titles) *In Search of the Common Good: The Ethics of Disclosing Personal Information Held in Public Archives*, granted by the University of British Columbia in 1987. Ms MacNeil is a freelance archivist, has a particular interest in archival ethics and descriptive standards, and was on the Association of Canadian Archivists' Ethics Committee. This puts Ms MacNeil's credentials on the record.

This hard-cover book is not an easy read. I wanted to digest it in one sitting, but fear that like *Babette's Feast*, that would be a task beyond most people. So it was consumed over three nights, with decent intervals for digestion and reflection on its qualities. It is enormously well researched, as might be expected for something based on a Master's thesis, and the footnotes and bibliography are a work of



research in themselves. But, as I progressed through the book my anger rose, and a question niggled in my mind: 'Where are we heading?' The general tone of the thesis was what got my anger rising. 'Oh dear,' I thought, 'here is another of those books that can only see one side of the argument.' My reaction here was starting to be the same as my reaction at the *International Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners' Conference* at the very swish Park Lane Hotel in Sydney in October 1992. At one lunch I was confronted by one not unknown privacy advocate with a general attack on archivists as people wanting not only to keep everything, but make it available as soon as possible, irrespective of the harm that this might cause. My arguments did not divert the single-minded view of the person, who instantly agreed with my proposition that perhaps we should destroy the First Fleet records, given that they gave much information about individuals. There are times when you are talking at such cross purposes that further discourse is a waste of time. See why this book took three nights to read?

The book is divided into seven chapters, as well as an introduction, selected bibliography, and an index. Just a short note on the index first: it is five and a bit two-column pages, comprising for the most part names of authors. In a book such as this there are some omissions in the index that should just not have occurred. In preparing for writing this review, I wanted to refresh my memory about what Ms MacNeil had to say about censuses (given that census records are retained and made available in North America). But there is no entry for **census** in the index. This would perhaps be excusable if the book was more of an easy read or bits of it were more accessible, but that it is not. It cannot be seen, therefore, as a reference work; it is a book that you will need to read in its entirety if you are interested in the whole debate.

The book is heavily biased to the North American experience, which is not surprising, and as its subtitle shows, responds to the situation in government archives. It is important that you read for yourself what the publishers say the book is about. As an overview, this is from the publicity blurb that came with the book:

The topics discussed . . . include the moral and legal principles underlying the right to privacy; the emergence of a specific right to information privacy and its embodiment in Canadian and American law; legislative attempts to reconcile competing interests in access and privacy; the trends in sociohistorical research that have contributed to the growing demand for records containing personal information . . .; the administrative and legal difficulties archivists encounter in administering access to these records, and the various approaches taken to cope with these difficulties; the ethics of disclosing personal information for research purposes and the principles that should guide archivists in making access decisions; and, finally, the policies and practices that will ensure a just and equitable balance between the competing imperatives of individual privacy on the one hand, and freedom of inquiry on the other.

All this is true, but my argument is twofold: the book does all this in a fairly turgid and academic way, and the basis of the thesis is one I need to be convinced of. Much of the work looks at the pre-archival situation, ie what it is about the need for governments to collect personally identified data that makes for genuine public disquiet. I kept finding myself thinking that the problems here are less for archivists than for good government administrators; the recent NSW ICAC report<sup>1</sup> on disclosure of information to third parties was not something that archivists could have much say in. If the full force of the law was applied to those public servants who use or sell information illegally, there would in all likelihood be less pressure to destroy or severely restrict what might otherwise be valuable archives. As archivists we must ensure that the dichotomy between illegal disclosure and general public release are well known and the two issues not confused.

The complaint I have about this book is the lack of emphasis on the use of restricted access to personally identified data to justify continued retention. If archivists have any professional claim in this area, it is their ability to safely restrict access to information until its harm to individuals is no longer an issue. The use of information for purposes other than it was collected for is a valid complaint in today's world of data matching. But surely there is an argument that this restriction cannot apply forever, and Ms MacNeil acknowledges this (but on p. 184) when she says that 'For certain types of records that implicate substantial privacy values — social service case files are an obvious example — a closed period of 150 years from the birth of the individuals concerned is not an unreasonable restraint to place on general access', a closure period that would generally agree with the Australian Archives' closure for seventy-five years after death. But, not enough emphasis is placed on this in the book, with much space taken up with discussing the problems confronting what the Australian Archives would term 'special access' or accelerated release.

The ambiguity of Ms MacNeil's thesis is increased when she appears to be dismissing the general notion of special access when she argues that 'the application of an intellectual means test for access to records containing personal information is an elitist practice that is incompatible with the democratic spirit of archival principles . . .' (p. 144). But then, in the final chapter she proposes that 'archivists intercede on behalf of record subjects to ensure that their rights to privacy are not violated' (p.185) by what I would consider an impractical proposal that there be review boards, 'the primary responsibility [of which would be] for determining whether access to archival records restricted for reasons of personal privacy will be allowed for research or statistical purposes, and the conditions under which access will be granted' (p.185). A membership of at least six

(including civil rights defendants, archivists, academics, lawyers, agency representatives and advocates for the rights of particular groups) is suggested for the review boards, but I would suggest that to convene such a group would be so costly, and the likelihood of agreement being reached so remote, that pressure would build to destroy the records before the time of general public access.

One final comment about books such as this is that they make much of worst case scenarios, such as the cases that led to the establishment of the ICAC investigation (or in this book the case in Sweden — renowned for its data privacy laws — where Stockholm University secretly kept tabs on every person born in Stockholm in 1953, a study not revealed until 1986). But there are cases where use of personally identified data has had a positive social benefit. At the Privacy Commissioners' Conference mentioned above, a German delegate pointed out that the advance in knowledge of causes for cancer could not have proceeded in Europe, with their restrictions on use of personally identified data for biomedical research; data in the US had to be used by a joint US-European team.

The ethical and practical issues for archivists posed by the access question are brought together in this book, with an emphasis on problems entailed in early access to personally identified information. However, it isn't the role of the archivist in this debate to comment on the rights or wrongs of any stated intention to either collect or use information before it becomes part of the archives. We have a role to document what happened, how and why. We should convince the sceptics that we are fully capable of restricting access for as long as general public pressure dictates, and support the full use of the law against those who violate rules on access. We should be as interested in the privacy debate as we are in any other information management issue, but we should not have our practices or principles swayed by it.

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Records Evaluation and Disposal  
Australian Archives

1. Independent Commission Against Corruption, *Report on Unauthorised Release of Government Information*. August 1992. 3 Volumes, 125 pp. ISBN 0 7305 9924 8.

**Richard J. Cox**, *Managing Institutional Archives: Foundational Principles and Practices*. New York. Greenwood Press, 1992. 306 pp. ISBN 0 313 27251 4. US\$55 (available from Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, USA).

Texts on the management of archives traditionally have aimed to cover archival knowledge in broad general terms, or in narrow specific contexts. Ann Pederson (*Keeping Archives*, Sydney 1987) and James

Bradsher (*Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, Chicago 1988) are examples of the former, and Alison Turton (*Managing Business Archives*, Oxford 1992) and Bruce Dearstyne (*The Management of Local Government Records*, Nashville 1988) examples of the latter. Few writers, as far as I know, have attempted a middle level perspective: Michael Cook's *Archives Administration; A Manual for Intermediate and Smaller Organisations and for Local Government* (Folkstone, 1977) is the only one which immediately comes to mind.

Richard Cox's new book, however, also adopts a middle level approach which focuses on what he calls *institutional archives*. To him, there are three kinds of archives organisations: *government*, *collecting* and *institutional*. Instances of this third type are found in institutions such as businesses, colleges and universities, museums, religious organisations, hospitals and so on. He concedes that governments are also institutions, but argues that the archival programs they usually establish have characteristics, for example their broader public mandate and statutory basis, which make them sufficiently different to constitute a separate species. We have to assume that this exclusion also applies to government banks, enterprises, universities, museums and hospitals, which given the Australian scene makes the distinction look a little shaky.

Similarities and differences can be argued about endlessly. Some see only two pure types of archives — *in-house* and *collecting* — which of course admit many variations in between. Many in-house archives also 'collect' beyond their parent institutions. And archives which 'collect' institutional records within a continuing relationship involving regular loan and transfer programs are essentially playing the role of a surrogate archives to which in-house functions have been subcontracted. No one's taxonomy is correct, only useful or less useful. Look at the ASA's special interest groups; there are two individual institutional groupings, for business archivists, and university and college archivists, and another for those from collecting archives!

So how does Cox's middle level approach work given a background of general archival knowledge? Throughout his book, he traverses the ground between general points (e.g. about archival principles) and particular applications in the institutional archivists' world. There is really no alternative to this, and overall he makes the connections convincingly. The formula which serves him best is the broad statement or broad statement expressed in institutional archives terms, followed by the connection (e.g. 'An institutional archives could use such a technique in conjunction . . .' p. 67).

If this method by and large is acceptable, Chapter Eight, *The Changing Context of Institutional Archives: Some Speculations*, is the low point. It has two sections, neither of which cover institutional archives as such. First, Cox describes efforts (mainly SAA efforts) to

develop models for the evaluation of archival organisations and suggests areas for further research. Second, he discusses some of the implications of the increasing use of information technology in institutions. His treatment of both is full of common sense, and may be interesting and informative to those archivists for whom electronic records and program audits and evaluations are new. But for once the link made to the institutional archives context is unconvincing. Most paragraphs finish weakly with a sentence simply stating that the general points also apply to institutional archivists. The chapter in fact is more suited to his earlier impressive compilation, *American Archival Analysis* (Metuchen, NJ 1990).

There are many compensating high points elsewhere in the book directly relevant to institutional archivists. Two illustrations should suffice. The first concerns Chapter Six, *Building Internal and External Support for Institutional Archives Programs*. Here, having succinctly paid his dues to the technicalities of appraisal, arrangement and description, preservation et al in the three preceding chapters, Cox provides the tyro archivist with a lesson in the *realpolitik* of surviving and flourishing in an institution, with a primary objective of achieving a 'high profile and understood' institutional archives. One suspects a good deal of his own professional experience informs the lesson; it is full of practical advice, warnings, ideas and strategies covering promotion, building institutional political support, establishing public programs and winning additional funding. Of this chapter's many quotable lines, the one which brought me to my feet concerned the need of the institutional archivist to 'have a proactive perspective' and 'be out of the stacks and in the organization' (p. 161). I would make the chapter the focus of a compulsory seminar in all university archives courses. There is more to the game than knowing how to restore original order.

Also noteworthy for its relevance is the penultimate chapter. Here Cox gets down to the nitty gritty by presenting three case studies of institutional archives — in a Catholic diocese, an educational institution, and a professional association. Each is based on the author's own consulting experience carried out for these bodies, of course suitably disguised to prevent identification. Through them many of the general points made in earlier chapters are illustrated, areas of weakness diagnosed and the importance of many of his arguments reinforced. Through them we learn in practice why clearly stated missions statements are important, why professionally qualified archivists are needed, why archives programs need a complementary records management program, and what opportunities can exist for documentation initiatives beyond narrow institutional concerns. His inclusion of some actual consultancy recommendations and costings and stress on the importance of the internal organisational culture also

add to the practical value of the case studies.

This book is intended not just for archivists working in institutional archives; it is for us all. In the *Preface* (viii-ix), Richard Cox writes that

. . . the archivist's quest to document society is dependent on the formation of viable institutional archives. Collecting repositories do not possess the space and other resources to acquire the voluminous archival records of even a small portion of the important institutions in our society. The modern archival profession must work to persuade these institutions to establish archival programs that meet acceptable professional standards, allow reasonable access to their records to outside researchers, and make a commitment to ensuring the survival of the archival records of these organisations. It is hoped that this book will be a useful tool in this work.

True to this hope, the first chapter, *Why Institutional Archives Are Important* carries many of the arguments one might put to a Board of Directors in favour of creating an institutional archives. In America, the prospects are apparently good: while not blind to the varied and sometimes short-term thinking which prompts their establishment, Cox is optimistic that the number of institutional archives will increase. However, in societies lacking an archives system which requires or fosters the preservation of the non-government sector records, cogent arguments alone will achieve little, a pessimistic conclusion drawn in reaction to some recent closures and downgradings of institutions' archives in Australia. If the archivist's quest really is nothing less than 'to document society', an elusive and fraught mission of breathtaking idealism and grandeur, our task is indeed daunting. But to start somewhere, perhaps it is time we produced an archives and records equivalent to Horton and Lewis's *Great Information Disasters* (London 1991) — there is no lack of material — and used it to whack Chief Executive Officers about the ears. *Managing Institutional Archives* could be in the other hand.

In promoting the idea that institutions should establish their own archives, the role of the collecting archives is downplayed. As quoted above, Cox I think correctly judges them to lack the resources and space, and elsewhere advances additional reasons favouring institutions shouldering what really is their own responsibility. In any case, he implies (pp. 16, 20) that the efforts collecting archives in the US made to preserve institutions' archives was misguided, for this discouraged a self-help mentality. This is surely not entirely fair, and overlooks the crucial role collecting archives play in preserving the archives of defunct institutions, and the archives of at least some of the thousands of clubs and societies which are, like institutions, also a feature of modern society, though less likely to be able to afford their own archives. Among archivists, only the New Zealanders I believe have seriously attempted to address the issue of clubs and societies as an actual category of records to be managed and preserved.

Favourable reviews usually end with tiresome quibbles. As an alternative, two last observations are offered. The book is well designed and produced, and uses tables, diagrams, lists and bolded quotations to break up the text. Finally, to return to our opening mention of Bradsher and Pederson, it was in the Spring 1990 issue of *The Public Historian* that the author himself reviewed their texts and found the former's in particular somewhat lacking. Judging Cox's 1992 text against the 1990 criterion of usefulness for graduate archival education, it passes with distinction. The case studies are there, the bibliography includes assessments, the chapter structure is well organised, and recent thinking is adequately covered. It is a significant first; it should assist institutional archivists; and I hope it will lead more institutions to establish or reopen archives.

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**William Maher**, *The Management of College and University Archives*, Metuchen, NJ and London. The Society of American Archivists and The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1992. 448 pp. ISBN 0 8108 2568 6. US\$49.50 (available from The Scarecrow Press, Inc. PO Box 4167, Metuchen NJ 08840 USA).

William Maher's book *The Management of College and University Archives* is the first English-language manual in this specialised area of archives. It assumes some familiarity with the language and functions of institutions of higher education, and is directed at both archivists and their 'administrative superiors'. It does not assume a high level of archival experience, covering as it does the basics of most archival functions in the particular context of university and college archives. The beginning of the book shows promise as a valuable new addition to the literature for an internationally significant segment of the profession.

Maher's introduction is clear about the purpose of the book and has a very useful section on terminology. The second chapter, on the fundamentals of 'academic archives' (the preferred umbrella term), provides sound advice on the goals, structure and content of archival programs in universities and colleges. It discusses the administrative placement of archives within the organisation, with a wise reminder that, although the archivist officially reports only to one parent department, he/she is the servant of many across the institution.

This being said, I must report that I found that *The Management of College and University Archives* often failed to live up to its initial promise. In fact, reading it rekindled for me two familiar themes in recent archival discourse: universality versus national/regional

particularity in archival practice and the need for specialised as opposed to general archival manuals. So, while this manual may suit its primary audience of university and college archivists in the United States, I felt that its concerns and solutions would be relevant only occasionally to university archivists in Australia.

The United States has more than 3340 universities and colleges whose variations in age, size, charter, funding (whether public or private), and extent of regulation by archival legislation are enormous. Most archival programs are of the collecting archives kind or have a mixture of collecting and in-house elements. Many, if not most, university and college archivists come from a library background. The task of writing a manual for archivists working in such widely differing individual circumstances and with varying levels of previous archival training must surely have been daunting. This book owes its genesis to a strong sense of common purpose among American academic archivists and to a perceived need for a specialised manual on the part of the College and University Archives Section of the Society of American Archivists (SAA).

Much of the treatment of archival techniques and program activities seems quite foreign to Australian practice. The sections on appraisal, use, outreach, exhibit(ion)s and oral history are useful summaries of the state-of-the-art and/or stimulating in their suggestions for implementing or improving programs in those areas. However, most of the technical content on arrangement and description and special record formats would be relatively unhelpful to non-American beginning university archivists.

If one ever needed an illustration of the deficiencies of the record group approach to archival control, it is here. There are over twenty pages dealing with the notion of levels of arrangement according to the record group concept, supported by examples of suggested classification schemes which are based on allocating numerical equivalents to units in an organisation's hierarchy. Later on, there are about eight pages recommending ways to deal with the inevitable problems caused to such schemes by organisational change! If implementing effective, dynamic control systems were a minor concern for the archivist, it might be possible to overlook this part of the book. But as it is such a critical activity for which there is a known, workable and fairly widely practised alternative, I can only see this as a major limitation to the universality of Maher's advice.

The chapter, *Special Records Problems*, selects relevant examples of its discussion of the application of archival techniques in the context of the higher education environment. I felt, though, that sometimes the argument for special qualities inherent in university/college records was overstated. It is true that archivists in academic institutions have to deal with large quantities of publications, with masses of



photographs received from many sources and with the disorganised records of student and academic organisations. However, are these records so different that they should cause university archivists to abandon archival principles in managing them? I think that Maher's careful exposition of archival principles followed later by disclaimers as to their applicability in this particular setting may only confuse new entrants to the profession, whatever the size of their holdings and whichever country they work in.

An important cultural difference between academic archivists in the United States and in Australia emerges in the discussion of records management. Most archival programs in the newer Australian universities are linked to records management programs, and the older universities have long traditions of centralised recordkeeping, even where there is no direct organisational link between the two areas. For us, the question is usually how close the link between archives and records management should be and how this is reflected in the organisational placement of the two functions. The question for American archivists is often whether a formal records management program exists in their institution or what to do to implement one, hence Maher's concentration on suggesting workable solutions to these problems in his section on records management as a programmatic activity for archivists.

Another illustration of the differences between priorities for university archives in the United States and Australia appears in the chapter, *Special Challenges and Opportunities*. Which six areas would we choose here? Maher selects the following: maintaining a classification system in the midst of institutional change; managing the documents of student and faculty organisations; managing students as staff; serving students as users; managing artefacts and 'coping with the historical consciousness endemic to colleges and universities'. I suspect that our lists would be very different. University archives using the series system would not have the first challenge and a sense of 'historical consciousness' is still to emerge as a major characteristic of Australian universities. On the other hand, I think that securing sufficient resources for the provision of adequate physical facilities for the storage, preservation and reference use of their archives would appear on many Australian university archivists' lists.

Yet there are insights to be drawn from Maher's general analysis of how to operate in the higher education environment. His suggestions on how to resist the pressures created by the use of archives for institutional nostalgic purposes and 'historical sideshows' would provide useful support for Australian archivists faced by similar problems. He gives thoughtful, interesting advice on managing parts of an archival program that we often seem to regard as peripheral, for example, outreach activities, oral history projects/programs and the

archivist's role in the research process. There is also a greater sense of idealism that we could learn from. It might be regarded as hopeful to propose that we might not always be in the 'fighting for resources' category, but our nuts-and-bolts focus could surely be tempered by an overall vision for university archives. Such a vision would emphasise more strongly the broader cultural value of the archives held by universities.

One persistent impression I had in reading *The Management of College and University Archives* is that it is a book of the 1980s, not of the 1990s. It is cast firmly in the custodial mould of archives management. For example, while he refers to the new American glossary of archival terminology (Lewis and Lynn Lady Bellardo's *Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators and Records Managers*), Maher does not follow their definition of archives which deletes 'non-current' from the characterisation of archival records. Nor does he really consider the implications of the post-custodial future for academic archivists. Many of his references are to works published before about 1985, although sometimes there are more recent relevant publications. An exception to this is Appendix I, which gives a reasonable bibliography of recent useful works on management for archivists. Another exception to this status quo approach is the inclusion of a summary of Helen Samuels' recent developmental work on appraisal in the university context (the subject of a second new book on university archives, *Varsity Letters*, published by SAA/Scarecrow last year).

Yet, except in writing about some activities such as appraisal, acquisition and outreach, Maher seems to have opted for a conservative approach. In some cases, this makes his book seem simply old-fashioned. For example, his discussion of the management of architectural records is based almost exclusively on strategies for handling and storing those records as outsized documents in their original format. There is no mention of microfilming as an alternative for preservation, space-saving or reference use of plans and similar records. Likewise, the section on machine-readable records is a good summary of concepts and problems, but does not deal with some key issues.

If we accept, then, that we can expect to find confirmation of accepted practice rather than innovation in a manual, do we have any other specifications for manuals, such as attractive design? The *Management of College and University Archives* would not win prizes for its layout: its chapters are divided into logical subsections, but the text is otherwise fairly dourly presented. Its sample forms are useful and clear, but perhaps highlighting of significant points in the narrative would have helped. The use of photographs could have relieved the density of the text.

This brings me back to my second general concern: do we need specific manuals or are we better off with general manuals which present basic advice and leave it to readers to apply in their own contexts? I would feel more confident in referring a new university archivist wanting to know about the management of audiovisual records, for example, to David Roberts' chapter in the new edition of *Keeping Archives* than to the relevant section in this book. I think the solution to this general problem is probably to be found in the current balance of archival literature in English.

There is no single source which can satisfy our need to be informed about issues of interest to us as new or experienced archivists. Our options include manuals, general and specialised, compilations of readings, monographs on specific topics, and professional journals carrying theoretical pieces and specific institutional reports. We must continue to draw on these diverse sources if we are to learn and grow in our professional practice, no matter what our national or institutional settings may be.

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**André Vanrie**, editor-in-chief, *Archives and Genealogical Science, Archivuum Vol. XXXVII*. International Council on Archives. München. K.G. Saur, 1992. 254 pp. ISBN 3 598 21237 2. \$99 (including postage) (available from D.W. Thorpe, PO Box 146, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3206).

This issue of *Archivuum*, a journal which is published twice each year, is a very mixed bag indeed. The subject is a very topical one as there would be no archive or library untouched by the explosion of interest in genealogy and family history. Statistics and personal observation reveal the growth in use of sources and resources, to the extent that more than 60% of many institutions' users are genealogists. This poses some problems for archives as well as it bringing benefits if properly handled. However there is scant reference to such matters in the current volume.

As a genealogist I find the recurring theme of genealogy as 'auxiliary' to other areas of study (history, demography, medicine, etc) very patronising. All the dictionaries I consulted defined 'auxiliary' as 'helping, subordinate, subsidiary, supporting' whereas it seems to me that genealogy has earned itself a place as an established area of study and research in its own right. It is after all an ancient and universal study deemed worthy of support by all civilisations, if for reasons different from those put forward by its aficionados today. I would be the first to admit that some of its practitioners do not add lustre to the

standing of genealogy as a valid field of research but the educational efforts of archives and libraries working with genealogical societies are gradually changing the level of sophistication of the inexperienced researcher. Once again, there is little mention of this in the volume under review.

One difficulty faced by many readers will be the multi-lingual nature of this publication. Of the twenty-one contributions nine are in French, six in English, four in Spanish or Portuguese (and the effort to translate one from Portuguese to Spanish seemed to me a terrible waste when the two languages are so similar), and two in German. A summary or abstract in English (now a lingua franca for many professionals) would have been helpful. The countries covered are a strange mixture — including Holland, Brazil, Iceland, China, Turkey and Hungary, as well as several articles surveying a continent or the international scene.

None of the articles, however, really addresses in any depth the topic printed on the front cover, that is 'Archives and genealogical sciences'. It may be that there is more coordination and cooperation between archives and genealogists in Australia than overseas (save in Great Britain) and that the impact of one upon the other is more frankly discussed and assessed here. I get the distinct impression that European archivists are more aloof from their users than is our custom.

Most of the articles are fascinating, though I searched in vain in several for mention of archives, eg the article on pedigree in breeding domestic animals. I think we deserve better than that in a journal published for archivists on a serious topic.

One of the most interesting articles was one dealing with the role of archivist as protector, not only of the records, but also of the people named in records, as in Holland during World War II. This article contained a depressing account of staff shortages in Dutch archives, lack of facilities and of the political will to improve them, and of poor relations between archivists and genealogists. However it ended on a more optimistic note about trends since the early 1980s. This contribution also contained a good description of genealogy as it should be practised, ending with a long exhortation on citing sources adequately and correctly. Amen to that, and not only by genealogists!

Two other articles stand out above the rest for their relevance and information. One is the contribution by Kahlile Mer on the activities of the Genealogical Society of Utah, particularly in the field of microfilming archival records. The other is the chapter by Christian Wolff on the evolution of names and the effect of civil law and the requirement for individuals to be registered in official records. Following the French Revolution there was a fad for naming children after heroes of the day and the government intervened, stopping the

use of 'prénoms ridicules'. What would they have thought of the proliferation of children named Sky, Kylie or Brad? Wolff links the passing on of names to the passing on of the culture of a society and nominates the keepers of these records as important custodians of the heritage of the society.

Other contributions describe the link between historical demography and genealogy to demonstrate social mobility and the value of family history in explaining networks of political influence through the ages; the use of genealogy to ascertain different kinship patterns and perceptions of consanguinity, which aid in finding the origins and extent of hereditary abnormalities. This has been a particular area of study in France, and the multi-disciplinary nature of the work is stressed, with the importance of the genealogist and his/her skill appreciated.

Da Cunha laments the poor state of public archives in Brazil, the lack of resources and huge gaps in the archival record. Surprisingly, a genealogical society was established there as long ago as 1931. The article on Canada is an interesting account of the establishment in 1988 of a Canadian Heraldic Authority and its relationship to archives, both in Canada and overseas. The chapter on Iceland made me long for Icelandic forebears, as some of their archival records are so complete, with an extant census for 1703, good parish records, and a decennial census for most of the 19th century. In the contribution on China it is stated that a catalogue of genealogies was due for publication in 1991 or 1992. Many of these are held in overseas libraries. The diversity of materials 'containing' Chinese genealogies is astonishing, including 12th century BC tortoise shell, bronze artifacts, stone and cloth, their survival emphasising their importance for political reasons. For similar reasons written genealogies were preserved by special agencies set up for the purpose by various emperors.

The only article about Britain, by the well-known Cecil Humphery-Smith, devotes a lot of space to promotion of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies of which he is the principal. Nonetheless, he gives an overview of the practice of teaching genealogy and prefaces this with a timely reminder that some archives owe their very existence to the interest in genealogical and other research by members of learned amateur societies following the Industrial Revolution. The same can be said today when many establishments could hardly justify to the economic rationalists an excuse for existing without the statistics counting numerous genealogists' 'bums on seats'.

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**Nan Bowman Albinski**, *Directory of Resources for Australian Studies in North America*. Melbourne. National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, 1992. 211 pp. ISBN 0 7326 0435 4. \$20 (including postage) (available from National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria 3168).

It is over twenty years since the publication of Phyllis Mander-Jones' guide to Australian manuscripts held in Britain and Ireland. In that period many researchers have wished that similar guides had existed for the Australian holdings in libraries and archives in other English-speaking countries. Nan Albinski, an Australian who is attached to the Australia-New Zealand Studies Center at Pennsylvania State University, has made a start to remedying this situation by collecting a great deal of information about Australian source material in the United States and Canada. The material includes manuscripts, archives, books, maps, paintings, prints, photographs, films, sound recordings, Aboriginal artefacts and botanical specimens held in over 200 repositories, ranging from the Society of California Pioneers to the Library of Congress.

It would be unfair to judge the directory by the standards set by Mander-Jones. Mander-Jones and her team spent years visiting hundreds of repositories and surveying their holdings in detail. Dr Albinski worked alone, she completed the project in a single year, and in that year she was living in Australia. Her directory is therefore based not on personal examination and searching of collections, but on surveys of published catalogues and lists and on an extensive correspondence with custodians. Inevitably, the responses varied enormously and were more helpful when Dr Albinski sought details about specific collections rather than the Australian holdings as a whole. The result is a guide with relatively brief entries and which does not make any pretence of being comprehensive.

The directory is easy to read, with large type and spacious layout. The entries have been grouped under twelve broad subject headings, such as *Travel Diaries and Letters*, *Maritime and Mercantile Records*, or *Scientific Papers*. Consequently, the larger repositories sometimes have several entries. Each entry provides an address, phone number, name of curator, opening hours, admission requirements, a note on catalogues or finding-aids, and description of the Australian holdings. The entries vary in length from three lines to two pages. Some entries are highly specific, referring to a single letter, while in a few cases, such as the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, some general information is supplied about the institution, but there is no mention of Australian holdings. There is a bibliography, an index of repositories and an index of personal names.

The archival material described in the directory dates from the late 18th century onwards and includes government records,

organisational archives (churches, publishing firms, political and trade union bodies, learned societies), and family and personal papers. Among the individuals represented are American explorers, seamen, gold-seekers, merchants, soldiers and diplomats who visited Australia, Australians who settled in or spent long periods in America, and Americans who corresponded with or collected material about Australia and Australians. Dr Albinski has highlighted a few substantial collections of Australiana: the Thomas Welton Stanford Collection at Stanford University, the William Sheldon Collection at Toronto University, and the Hartley Grattan Collection at Texas University. There are entries for major collections of Australian expatriates, such as the artists Ambrose Patterson and Percy Leason, the actress Judith Anderson, the singer Majorie Lawrence, the writers Sumner Locke Elliott and Colin McInnes, the aviator and explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins, and the governor Sir Anthony Musgrave. Other Australians appear in a number of entries: Alice Henry, Harry Bridges, Christina Stead, Patrick White, Percy Grainger and Peggy Glanville-Hicks.

Apart from the maritime records, which have mostly been microfilmed by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, the existence of most of these collections has not been widely known. Dr Albinski has performed a valuable service for Australian historians and other researchers, as well as for American researchers studying American-Australian relations. As she recognises, it is just a beginning and now that she has returned to America she may be able to carry on the task by visiting some of the major institutions and surveying more closely their holdings of Australian materials.

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 National Library of Australia

**Longman Professional, *Efficiency in Public Sector Records Management: Applying New Technologies and New Structures to Achieve More With Less*.** Seminar papers. Sydney. 1992. 200 pp.

I was pleased to be asked to review the papers published following this conference. It has given me the opportunity to examine the current state of thinking regarding records management in the public sector in Australia and examine it for ideas that would be transportable to the British civil service environment. The conference itself has already been reviewed by Greg O'Shea in a previous volume of *Archives and Manuscripts* (Volume 20, Number 2, November 1992). I do not intend to cover the same ground as I find myself in total agreement with many of the comments made in his review.

The conference papers cover a wide array of subjects but some of the

papers do not seem to sit comfortably with the overall objective to:

... give participants an overview of the variety of management, technological and corporate issues affecting records management today.

Some of the case studies would have been more valuable for a wider audience if they had gone on to extrapolate some general principles and guidance and concentrated less on the historical development of particular organisations.

I was disappointed that the two workshops on electronic records were not written up more fully. This is an area that has become increasingly important to everyone involved in records management and the import of David Bearman's workshop does not come across in the papers. I would have been very interested to read what Greg O'Shea (in his review of the conference) describes as:

... a systematic and intellectually rigorous outline of the factors which need to be considered in the development of electronic records policy.

David Bearman's keynote address, *The Changing Character of Corporation Communications*, clearly points the way forward for records managers who are brave enough to rise to the challenge. Records managers need to redefine their role within the modern corporate context and it is suggested that:

... records managers can help define strategies which mix policy, design, implementation and standard approaches to satisfying evidential requirements. They can explore the fit between each strategy and the organisational culture and adopt strategies congruent with organisational culture requirements when multiple approaches will work.

Most of the papers send the clear message that records management cannot afford to be reactive in the modern environment but must develop a proactive role within the changing technological corporate setting.

Some of the papers highlight other important issues that often get overlooked because of the modern fixation with technology. Customer service, public accountability and managing people are some of these issues. Hilary Rowell presented a paper on the introduction of the RINSE Project (Records Information Service) by the Australian Archives. She discusses the processes to identify and incorporate the needs of end users and at the same time some potential pitfalls are highlighted.

*Managing Your People* presented by Elaine Eccleston covers restructuring, new technology, multiskilling and retraining. All too often existing staff in the records management field are viewed as an impediment to change and not as a potential corporate asset to be developed. In the efforts to obtain 'more for less', staff are nearly always the first casualty.

The final session of the conference was a joint presentation by David



Bearman, Judith Ellis and Graham Pratt entitled *The Future Role of Records Managers and Archivists*. It was described in the conference program as:

An overview of new systems procedures and technologies with an accent on the type of person and management style required to implement them.

Unfortunately no papers are published from this session. This is a shame as it may have provided the reader with the necessary linkages between the disparate presentations of the two-day conference.

As the public sector moves closer to corporate sector concepts of economic efficiency, total quality management and customer service, there is no place for complacency in any sphere. The message that emerges from these conference papers is that records managers have to reevaluate what they have to offer to their organisations, where they fit in the new corporate structures, how they assess the new user needs and how they meet those needs in the 'more for less' environment. Overall the conference papers provide an interesting starting point for further discussion of new technology and new structures in the public sector environment.

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**Dina Benévol and Associates**, *Safe Keeping: How to Solve the Common Records Handling and Storage Problems in Any Organisation*. Pearl Beach, NSW. Leo Maris Publishing, 1992. 210 pp. ISBN 0 646 07206 4. \$70 (available from Leo Maris Publishing, 86 Diamond Road, Pearl Beach, NSW 2256).

The purpose of this manual is, in the words of the author, 'to provide guidelines and practical advice on how to provide storage for records of any organisation'. The format of the manual is simple and straightforward. Two main headings have been used to group together different aspects associated with storing records. The first is *Planning* which draws together determining needs, why records deteriorate, on-site vs off-site storage, damage prevention, anti-disaster planning and writing a records policy statement. Part 2 incorporates *Implementation* issues such as making an instant impression on the problem, inventories, on-site archives for non-active records, care of paper-based records, the life of various formats, care of audio, video and computer tapes, use of resources within a reference library, how to set up a historical archive (sic), repairing damaged records and writing a procedures manual.

The manual is available in either hard copy or on computer disk. The list of subjects covered is comprehensive and indicates that much thought and research has been put into developing a manual which will be practical and easy to follow.

The format of each chapter is straightforward. At the front is a list of the key aspects to be covered; at the conclusion the key learning outcomes are listed. In between is a short text supplemented by checklists and sample forms that can be used in the practical application of the ideas suggested. Some chapters also include step by step instructions to guide the reader through the issues and to help focus on the process. The format is very user friendly with its easy to read writing style and all the forms well set out. The use of this style for learning and understanding is very effective.

On the whole the structure of the manual is useful, although the sequencing of some sections is mysterious. For instance the writing of a records policy statement is covered in the middle and writing of a procedures manual at the end. Both areas deserve more prominence.

Of greater concern is the tendency to treat complex issues with simple solutions. Several chapters fall into this category. Among them is one titled *How to Make an Instant Impression on the Problem*. The chapter suggests that the best way to start to sort out a records problem is to organise each year a clean-up day to discard obsolete records. This involves staff *sorting and destroying* documents in their possession which they believe are not required. Such a task, while having admirable objectives, is almost certain to result in important documents being discarded unless rigid supervision and direction is provided. In the chapter a list is provided of the reasons for keeping certain records, unfortunately the prime one of retaining records *for their* continuing administrative value on the basis of *their* evidential and information value is missing.

The manual is very weak *on both* appraisal and arrangement and description which rate only a passing reference. Another important omission is the failure to expand upon the statutory requirements which exist to control the storage of records. For instance, no mention is made of obligations to maintain certain records for taxation or corporate affairs purposes. In the public sector, the role of the various archival authorities, in particular the need to have records disposal schedules approved before records can be destroyed, is not covered.

Some of the technical specifications are different from those in other reference books, for instance optimum temperatures for paper records are given as  $20^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$  and 40% humidity; by contrast *Keeping Archives* recommends 55% humidity.

The manual lacks an index or detailed guide to the contents of the various chapters. This leaves the reader guessing where particular references may be found. In the chapter dealing with disaster recovery procedures no mention is made of the actions required to control

damage to paper files and books caused by water, a serious omission.

The manual fills a void in the available literature on how to organise storage for various records. Its style and format make it easy to digest. The best use for the manual would be as a base upon which to start learning and building up a level of expertise or for quick reference. Its greatest problem is the superficial treatment of critical areas. The manual would be most useful for small to medium size organisations or community groups who wish to take positive steps to ensure that their records are provided with the most appropriate storage arrangements. Users in other organisations may find the manual useful but its omissions and simplistic solutions to complex problems are limitations hard to overcome.

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## Conferences/Seminars

**Rendezvous in Montreal.** 56th Annual Meeting. Society of American Archivists. Le Centre Sheraton, Montreal, Canada. 13-17 September 1992.

The dream became reality! My first SAA Meeting. Over many years I looked at the SAA meeting programs with envy and finally I was there.

The SAA conference and meetings had to be the most intensive of the four conferences held in Montreal in September. Those of us who had lasted to this point in the conference-going were very careful to pace ourselves to make sure we lasted the distance. Activities started at 8 am most mornings with the formal sessions finishing at 5.30 pm. Lunch and coffee breaks were kept to a minimum or were non-existent. The conference consisted of pre-conference workshops, session papers, committee, functional section and round table meetings. In some time slots there could be up to eleven choices!

The conference did not have a theme. As it was held in Canada there was a great deal of input from Canadian colleagues into the program. A highlight was a series of five sessions titled *2020 Vision* which were similar to plenary sessions. The last of the series was a summary session. The aim was to present perspectives on broad changes in society and their likely impact on the archival profession. The sessions were very successful.

The round table and functional section meetings were open to everyone. In many ways these sessions were the most informative and reassuring. Many of the issues we face are in common. There were some results of new initiatives which were of great interest to my

institution and they have already influenced our direction in some areas. The range and number (over forty) of these meetings made the selection of which to attend very difficult. The standard was so good that you realised how much you were missing out on by not being in a position to attend them all.

The trade fair and exhibits, while not as large as the ICA extravaganza, made a strong contribution. I gather that these events were not as large as usual due to the location of the meetings and the difficulty of making direct sales in another country. The number of delegates attending the conference was also down to 800, instead of the usual 1,200. Once again this was put down to the venue being in another country, but it provided perhaps a more cosmopolitan mix (including nine Australians).

The atmosphere of the meetings was very friendly and open. The American and Canadian delegates were very interested in the Australian 'contingent'. Some of us had attended SAA meetings many times in the past, and for others this was their first time. Speaking for myself, I had a congenial and rewarding experience, which I hope to have the opportunity of repeating in the future.

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 State Archives of Western Australia

**Dismantling the Tower of Babel: Developing a Common Language Through Descriptive Standards.** Seventeenth Annual Conference. Association of Canadian Archivists. Hotel Maritime, Montreal, Canada. 12-15 September 1992.

One of the main events of the Montreal extravaganza, the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) conference was wedged in between the International Congress on Archives and the Society of American Archivists annual meeting. (The Association des Archivistes du Quebec (AAQ) scheduled its conference for the same days as the ACA.) Workshops, section meetings and social events aside, the conference comprised a keynote speaker's breakfast, nine concurrent sessions and a joint session with the Society of American Archivists and the Association des Archivistes du Quebec, all scheduled over one weekend.

The number of concurrent sessions meant that it was impossible for any one participant to attend more than a selection of what the conference had to offer. Because no papers were available, it is difficult to provide an informed overview or evaluation of the conference as a whole. David Bearman has already given an account of it, including some sessions not mentioned here, in *Archives and Museum Informatics* vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 14-15.

The objective of the organisers in choosing descriptive standards as a theme was to provide a forum for archivists to reflect on the development of standards to date, and 'to debate and commiserate with each other' in sharing ideas and experiences at local, national and international levels. Topics covered the concepts, principles and implementation of archival description and descriptive standards, and the effectiveness of archival information retrieval systems.

The choice of Jean Dryden as keynote speaker was an excellent one. In an entertaining address on the development of descriptive standards in Canada, Dryden discussed the effect of standards on descriptive practices and on institutions, and the implications for researchers. She used 'The Wizard of Oz' in painting a colourful picture of the journey towards descriptive standards — a theme later taken up by other speakers. It was refreshing to hear an archivist who was not afraid to argue that her fellow archivists had much to learn from librarians in such areas as authority work and automation, and that they should seek help from the closely allied profession of librarianship.

Of the later sessions I was able to attend, two featured interesting exchanges of information that reflected the variations in approach to standards and description between different countries. The first of these sessions, on the concept of the archival *fonds*, featured the Canadians Terry Cook and Keith Stotyn, with a commentary by Sigrid McCausland. Both Cook and Stotyn advocated the validity of the *fonds* in archival description, though the latter emphasised that the series need not be a subordinate level to *fonds*. Both speakers acknowledged the value of Peter Scott's theories, and Sigrid McCausland focused further attention on the Australian series system. She stressed, among other things, the separation of intellectual and physical control, the importance of function, and the ability of the system to give archivists a tool for early intervention in the records continuum. Australian practices were thus explained and justified at this forum, as they were on other occasions in Montreal.

Another session of special interest, although it did not quite live up to expectations, was a comparison of MAD, RAD and APPM. Michael Cook, Kent Haworth and Steven Henson all described and argued the merits of the standards with which they are associated. As an exchange of information and clarification of practices the session was useful, but I doubt there were any converts made to the different methods. The pride of the speakers in their respective standards was obvious: for Cook, MAD was the work of 'real archivists'; Haworth referred to RAD, a result of consensus, as 'a microcosm of the nation that produced it'; and the title of Hensen's paper, 'The First Shall be First', speaks for itself.

A few years ago, a conference devoted entirely to descriptive standards would probably have attracted little enthusiasm. The range

of speakers and topics at this one reflect the common interest and importance now attached to the issue of standards by many archivists. I found it both informative and stimulating; the program and quality of speakers was good, while the informal atmosphere was in marked contrast to the much larger ICA which preceded it. My only criticisms are of the venue, the Hotel Maritime (whose thin partitions between meeting rooms resulted in undue background noise on occasion) and more importantly, the lack of printed papers. With so many concurrent sessions it is a pity that conference participants did not receive any of these. As far as I am aware, the proceedings will not be published. We shall have to be satisfied with whatever is published as individual articles in *Archivaria* or other journals.

Glenn Schwinghamer  
Assistant Manuscript Librarian  
National Library of Australia

**Archives and Records Management: New Technologies and Practices.** The British Council, Liverpool, England. 1-13 November 1992.

Two themes were proposed for in-depth study at this British Council sponsored seminar. The first week concentrated upon professional practices, or methodologies, while week two concerned new technology. Twenty participants attended the course, from five continents. The split between records managers and archivists was even, although the Europeans generally do not distinguish between the two professions. A very high level of participation was expected, and a great deal of valuable information was shared among participants and speakers in the formal class and around the table at dinner and tea. Participants represented Zimbabwe, South Africa, Israel, Sabah in Malaysia, Pakistan, Central, North and South America, Europe, Russia and other nations. A range of skills and institutions were represented, varying from the National Records Supervisor of a tiny southern African state with a small budget and comparatively few files, to the Archivist for a modern faith which holds the original sacred writings of their prophet, to the managers of information for the European sub-states of Catalona, Spain and Rheinland, Germany.

The differences in our institutions and backgrounds were to be positive elements in discussion and comparison throughout the course, as were differences in emphasis for archivists and records managers. Many of us came to the seminar feeling our profession is in a transitional stage. New technologies and practices are having their impact upon us all.

As every records manager knows, however, information management is a political issue. Shelley Hardcastle, from British

Oxygen, described information politics as anarchic, feudal, utopian, monarchic or federal; the best being the federal model with negotiated information exchange and the worst feudal with information baronetcies. The growth from Feudal to Federal is evolutionary, and successful companies are moving along this information pathway. One of the results of this is a move away from centralisation, and some of the biggest and supposedly most successful central registries in the UK are being broken down. Economical records creation, cost effective access, efficient storage, and maximum exploitation of the information value are Shelley Hardcastle's four objects of records management. This is a long way from earlier, simplistic views of records management along the lines of 'efficient storage and retrieval'.

Ms Hardcastle was also of the opinion that flexibility of service and measurable standards were essential in the design of modern records storage and retrieval systems, leading to cost-effective service of an agreed quality. Patricia Methven from King's College, London, also stressed measurable standards in her talk on *Performance Measurement*. Implicit in performance measurement is standardisation, the underlying theme of the seminar program. Information can be a key competitive differentiator and the service revolution requires standardisation of the practices used to manage information to allow better access. No session other than *Marketing* raised so varied a range of opinions as *Performance Measurement*, with the class being divided into those in favour and those vehemently against.

Mr Alan Cameron, Archivist to the Bank of Scotland and Chairman of the British Society of Archivists, first raised an issue we were to hear often over the next two weeks. The UK administration is determined to devolve local government, and there are grave fears held for the integrity of the Record Groups, reflecting as they do the current administrative practice. One has to wonder why series-based description has not been more actively considered, as it is designed to cope with administrative change. To be fair, however, any detrimental change to the wonderful County Records Offices would be a sacrilege. He was followed by Patrick Cleary, the inaugural full-time Secretary of the British Society of Archivists. A full-time Secretary has given the Society the ability to do a lot more work nationally and internationally as well as facilitating a higher profile.

Dr Anne Thurston from University College, London, spoke of the transition in training for archivists and records managers. She feels there is acceptance that dynamic-records training is important for archivists, and static-records methodologies are valid for records managers. Digital data control is vital for both sides of the profession, as is awareness of administration factors such as administrative history and current administrative practice.

Dr Dorothy Johnson, Keeper of Manuscripts at Nottingham University, spoke about changes in our professional methodologies. The pressure for change and standardisation is coming from automation, administrative change, a general desire to increase the status of the profession, the desire for efficient resource use, and the scale of the problems faced. Further views on descriptive standards were presented by Michael Cook, who not only undertook the organisation of the academic side of this seminar, but had also been very active recently in gaining draft approval for the *Manual of Archival Description* (MAD2) descriptive standards. These standards are now widely accepted in the UK, the central government of the EEC, Spain and Portugal, and are based firmly upon the classical methodology, as espoused by Jenkinson.

Technology, the second string to the seminar, was tackled by a number of speakers including Nicholas Cox, who spoke to us about managing archives and records in the new media, and then he and Shelley Hardcastle shared the floor, but not the viewpoint, in a discussion of modern records management practice. Nicholas Cox, Principal Assistant Keeper at the Public Record Office, drew from the PRO's experience with electronic records (both those it designed or is custodian of). In particular the PRO is interested in data with a high information content, capable of analysis other than for its original use, and accompanied by correct and full documentation. Nicholas feels that COLD technology (Computer Output to Laser Disk) is the most suitable format for the storage and retrieval of electronic records. This medium is suitable for databases in their dynamic form, static data such as survey data, and registers or catalogues of data. COLD format is machine independent and solves some of the need to maintain a museum of reading devices for outmoded format-types.

An exciting hands-on technological experience was facilitated by Dr Christopher Woolgar who directed our perusal of the full-text Mountbatten archives and the fully indexed Duke of Wellington papers. They can be accessed on-line via the international academic network, which in Australia goes under the acronym AARNET. Dr Woolgar explained the methodology in use here as 'late 20th Century Calendaring', and relates this form of database to electronic desk-top publishing. We switched to the RLIN network in the USA and we searched a number of on-line archive databases on that system. At the moment all these systems are only retrieving text, but in place already are multi-media systems that retrieve sound and pictures as well.

Another feature of the seminar were the field visits, to Clywd Records Office for a demonstration of their computer system, linked very successfully to the County's Library OPAC system, and to West Yorkshire where five local Record Offices are on-line and linked on a main-frame based network. West Yorkshire has accessioned their



material, over 20,000 accessions, at the Record Group level (Level 2 in the MAD terminology). There are more than twelve miles of shelving filled in the strongrooms, and twenty professional archivists make up half of the total staff in the service, with 20,000 visitors a year. Keith Sweetmore, our host for the day, describes himself as one of the few Technarchivists in the UK.

The quality of the social program organised by the British Council was excellent, with a succession of evening events such as receptions and an excellent day out on the Sunday to sites of local interest. In addition the course was held at the Liverpool Medical Institution, a mid-19th century building of considerable merit, yet possessing all the conveniences to make an Australian lecturer green with envy. Bringing together an ad-hoc group of fellow professionals, with accommodation, entertainment and a good selection of guest lecturers and field visits provided, will ensure a fruitful experience. More perhaps was learnt around the dinner table than in the lecture room, but that is as it should be.

As a result of attending this seminar I realised that providing client-oriented service was a very powerful tool in an evolving business. Client needs are important in the design of any information delivery system, and realisation of the client's predominance was expressed by participants and speakers alike. The course, including full accommodation and all excursions, cost £1,310. I have no doubt that the British Council course was good value for money, was interesting and very informative. I'd recommend attendance to any professional records manager or archivist.

David Povey  
Records Manager  
Bankers Trust Australia Limited

**A Focus on Synergy.** Records Management Association of Australia, 1992 National Convention, Sydney. 8-11 September 1992.

The 1992 Records Management Association of Australia Convention was held under the theme of *A Focus on Synergy*. In the words of the convention brochure the aim was to 'review and reflect on the changes in both technology and business that are forging new management techniques, and re-introducing older skills'.

The convention was conducted over three full days, with papers being presented by the invited speakers. In addition a trade display ran concurrently with the convention. Approximately 280 people representing the broad spectrum of records management through the private and public sectors attended. The range of speakers was diverse, from academics to practitioners, consultants and observers. The only ones missing from the speakers' podium were the records managers

who were conspicuous by their absence. The reason for this was not immediately apparent but, given the issues covered and the general direction of the papers delivered, the casual observer could be left with the impression that the records manager of tomorrow may be an endangered species unless the considerable challenges of the future are tackled.

The trade display area is always an enjoyable part of the convention. A walk through this area soon resulted in an arm full of brochures (all paper) and samples. While the dominance of computer software in the market places still continues there was also competition from other products such as storage equipment, microfilm equipment and file covers. The trade display continues to be an important attraction of the convention. The opportunity to talk to suppliers and examine products all under one roof is a welcome one.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Mairéad Browne of the University of Technology, Sydney, who argued that education for records managers was critical in advancing the recognition of the unique and common grounds which records management shares with other information areas. Research was suggesting a trend where organisations were seeking to employ people with a number of skills; the days of the specialist were declining.

Other speakers presented a range of papers which addressed various aspects associated with the theme of the convention. While some concentrated upon emphasising the educational and training aspects, for example Hoo and Kirk, others chose to explore the technological issues (Hunter-White, Thompson and Wing). The overview and coordination aspects were canvassed by Allen, Newman and Major. The human issues of synergy were covered by Howse and McLean.

While the majority of speakers emphasised the benefits that could be accrued through using the power of integration, it was left to Sue McKemmish to counter with her view that the distinctions between the information professionals were not necessarily a disadvantage. While acknowledging the commonalities she also identified the unique characteristics such as the importance of protecting the record of the transaction.

The papers were all presented in a professional and interesting way. The range of subjects covered emphasised the depth of the issues and gave participants plenty to mull over as they tried to find their way out of the information maze.

The convention followed the broad theme of recent RMAA conventions in suggesting that records management is synonymous with information management and that there should be an embellishment of the ideals of information management transferred to records management. To some extent the conference succeeded in

raising many issues involved with transferring the ideals of synergy into actions. Whether the convention provided the answers is a much harder issue on which to pass judgement.

The difficulty one is confronted with in attending any conference where concurrent sessions are held is to choose the session which you feel will be of most interest. Inevitably, at a later stage a colleague tells you that the last paper was excellent while you moan that the paper you went to was long and boring. Choice is the alternative theme that could be applied to this conference. The choice explored was the idea that greater value could be obtained by viewing information management as a multi-dimensional concept, which when placed together provides a whole larger than the individual elements. So was the choice to engage in synergy or to 'unsynergise' and thus retain the individualism of the various components.

If you attended this conference looking for a solution to your everyday records management problems then you were probably disappointed. On the other hand, if you approached the convention with an open mind, there was considerable opportunity to ponder some of the intellectual aspects associated with managing records more effectively, particularly in an environment where the forces of technology, resource constraints and right sizing are often perceived to rate higher than managing information.

The papers of the convention are available from the Records Management Association of Australia (New South Wales Branch), PO Box 1620, Sydney, NSW 2001 for \$65.

Philip Taylor  
Records Manager  
The University of Queensland

## Exhibitions

**Within Living Memory: Records and Images of Australia in the 1950s.** An exhibition presented by the Australian Archives. Parliament House, Canberra. 5 November-20 December 1992.

Memory is a strange and subtle force, paradoxically powerful but elusive and mysterious, fragile but always compelling. The power of memory can lie apparently dormant but with the right trigger or prompt, its force can be released and the past opened up like a landscape. With the taste of sweet madeleines, Proust finds the inspiration and the voice to take his readers back to experience and to live again his own and a generation's *temps perdu*.

In its exhibition *Within Living Memory* recently presented at the new Parliament House in Canberra, the Australian Archives has provided for the post-war generations of Australians a remarkable

window onto the lost years of the 1950s. Under the sub-title *Records and Images of Australia in the 1950s*, this exhibition drew on a range of official records and photographs to give a sense of time and place and a feel for the issues and preoccupations which dominated national life and sensibilities in the years following the Second World War. For this reviewer, a product of the post-war baby boom, the exhibition exerted an astonishing power — out of all proportion to its essential modesty — to bring back to my memory the outlines and configurations, the sense and feeling of an Australia which in the 'eighties and 'nineties seems utterly changed from the way it was in the years of my childhood.

It is sometimes asserted in archives and libraries that documentary materials, especially letters and diaries, however interesting their content, make poor exhibition materials. In the public programs stakes, it is sometimes difficult for archivists and librarians to compete with their more glamorous counterparts in galleries and museums. But the effort is a worthwhile and necessary one both to promote the nature of the work and service which these institutions provide and to ensure that the riches of their holdings are brought before a wider audience.

It is especially pleasing to see the Australian Archives taking on a more active role in the promotion of its remarkable and wide-ranging holdings. The notion that archival repositories are the mere custodians of dusty records does a disservice to the professional men and women who choose archival employment and who serve as custodians of records which are a vital part of Australia's cultural heritage. I would like to think that the success which attaches to the *Within Living Memory* exhibition will encourage the Australian Archives to plan for the wider exposure of this and future exhibitions. While it is good to utilise a key national venue such as Parliament House, there is obvious merit in seeking to place exhibitions outside Canberra both in capital cities and in regional centres.

And if community access is a key objective, why not undertake the publication of selected materials? The photographic component of *Within Living Memory* drawn largely from the resources of the Australian News and Information Bureau, is outstanding and suggests many possibilities for exploitation and dissemination in books, cards and through the electronic media. The potential of these materials for school study kits and for use in history and social studies courses is considerable.

There are, quite simply, some stunning and powerful images: the group of children gathered at Fairbairn RAAF Base in Canberra in 1954 awaiting the arrival of Queen Elizabeth II during her first Australian tour (see illustration), the family group complete with FJ Holden on the summit of Mt Kosciusko in the days when environmentalism formed no part of the Australian lexicon; the seated



*One of the evocative images from the exhibition. AA:CRS A 1200, L25136.*  
 Photo: Courtesy Australian Archives.

row of hatted and pearled Australian ladies of rank at a welcoming luncheon for Madame Subandrio, wife of Indonesia's Foreign Minister, during an official tour; the reassuring figure of Prime Minister R. G. Menzies receiving official visitors — guests from Japan — in his modest and homely Parliament House office, a far cry from the new generation of executive offices. And through a computer touch screen, *Within Living Memory* provided menu access to a further 540 photographs arranged in subject categories such as home, work, recreation and architecture.

Despite a burgeoning internationalism and the icy reach of the Cold War, Australia in the 1950s was a narrow, enclosed and complacent society, still tied to the apron strings of Mother Britain. Its city life was provincial rather than metropolitan, its social order was snug and patriarchal, its values essentially suburban. This exhibition revealed those characteristics, though more by inference than by any explicit interpretation. The photographs and the documentary exhibits were left largely to speak for themselves: to the viewer who is informed, perceptive and historically aware, the exhibits communicated a loud and clear message; to the intuitive viewer the exhibits, like Proust's

madeleines, released the flow of memory. But to later generations of young Australians or to the many overseas visitors I saw in the exhibition, what message did this exhibition communicate? A brief introductory caption of text introduced each section of the exhibition providing just enough detail to give a factual context. But essentially the exhibits stood alone, a window through which the cultural, social and political landscape of Australia in the 1950s could be viewed but not necessarily understood. Interrogation of that landscape was left to the imagination and the critical capacity of the viewing audience and this clearly varies according to each person's background and their degree of sophistication and historical and social awareness.

In press comment at the time the exhibition opened in Canberra last November, a spokesperson for the Australian Archives was reported as suggesting that the exhibition was not intended to tell a story — 'we are just presenting the documents' (*Canberra Times*, 24 November, p. 7). Exhibitions of course do tell stories and they do so on at least two levels. The first is through a process of curatorial selection which sees a critical judgement applied to the wider mass of material from which exhibits are finally drawn. It is misleading to imply that the selection of exhibits has been or should be achieved with absolute neutrality. On another level, and an important one, the exhibits themselves represent a vital body of raw historical data which demands to be read and interpreted. Is it really good enough to say that this responsibility forms no part of the curatorial process and that the onus for reading and interpretation rests with the viewing audience? Curatorial judgement is an essential ingredient in the shaping and presentation of exhibitions. It is a sensitive tool which must be wielded with care and skill: it is legitimate to pose questions, to suggest possibilities and to provide signposting along the way; it is not legitimate to impose a view or to tell an audience what to think. In assuming the role of the so-called neutral provider of information, the Australian Archives on this occasion has opted for a blandness of approach which in the end did a disservice to its outstanding material and to its responsibility as the custodian of records which form an essential part of Australia's documentary heritage.

I am aware that this characteristic of neutrality is something which derives from the ideal archival model advanced originally by Sir Hilary Jenkinson and to which Australian archivists still pay considerable obeisance. But for all that is good and powerful in theories which provide a frame of reference and a sense of professional purpose and direction, they can sometimes represent a strait-jacket which restricts and limits the imagination.

The exhibition *Within Living Memory* was an important and welcome initiative of the Australian Archives. It is to be hoped that this exhibition will be seen by audiences in other parts of Australia and that

in its future planning, Australian Archives will consider the development of a program of exhibitions which can be presented both in Canberra and elsewhere in Australia. Such a program would serve both to enhance the image of national Archives and to perform the democratic service of offering to Australians access to that diverse range of materials which constitute the historic lifeblood of the nation itself.

John Thompson  
National Library of Australia

**Aborigines and the War.** An exhibition at the Djorra Djagamirra Collection, the Northern Territory University Library, Darwin. November 1992.

For those of us who live in the Northern Territory, 1992 has been a year where remembrance of the Japanese air attacks on Darwin and Northern Australia during World War II could not be ignored. To mark the 50th anniversary of the first air raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942, the Northern Territory Government, the RSL, the Defence Forces and numerous other contributing organisations dedicated the year to commemoration of Northern Australia's involvement in World War II.

Apart from numerous projects involving the enhancement of historic sites and the collection of archival records and oral histories, a major historical focus was devoted to displays and exhibitions by various organisations. The Northern Territory University Library mounted four displays during the year, featuring *The Bombing of Darwin*, February-March, *Southeast Asia — NT Links*, April-May, *Territory Life in the 1940s*, June, and *Aborigines and the War*, November.

As details of Northern Australia's involvement in World War II have remained shrouded to most Australians over the last fifty years, even more so has the involvement of Aborigines in the defence of Australia. At least 3000 Aborigines served in World War II, and the Federal Government formerly acknowledged their contribution during 1992.

This exhibition consisted of four contributions, from the communities of Yirrkala in East Arnhem, Bathurst Island, Katherine and Darwin.

The Yirrkala contribution consisted of display boards built by the community to present a selection of photographs reproduced from the Donald Thompson collection at the Museum of Victoria. Donald Thompson was an anthropologist who formed the Special Reconnaissance Unit (SRU) which was a unique group of Aborigines assembled to use traditional Aboriginal fighting methods in bush

defence. The photographs of the SRU members and their activities are both vivid and impressive.

The Bathurst Island component of the exhibition came from the Patakiyala Museum at the town of Nguuu. The photographs and narrative focused on Father McGrath's radio message to Darwin on 19 February 1942 that six Japanese 'Zeros' were headed for Darwin after strafing the Catholic mission. His message was acknowledged but went unheeded, and 188 Japanese carrier-borne aircraft hit Darwin at 0958 hours. This display also recognised the contribution of Matthias Ulugura, an Aborigine who captured the first Japanese prisoner of war on Australian soil at Melville Island.

Another contribution to the exhibition featured a portrayal from the National Trust Museum at Katherine of the role of Aboriginal civilians in war time. While many part-Aborigines were evacuated to southern Australia, many Aborigines were moved to army camps to provide an invaluable work force. This aspect of the exhibition illustrated the various tasks which the Aborigines performed, enabling troops to be deployed elsewhere.

The final component of the exhibition came from the Museum and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory, and featured the issues of Aboriginal enlistment in the defence forces. After much public pressure the Military Board determined that 'full-blood' Aborigines were precluded from enlistment, but mixed race Aborigines of 'substantially' European origin were eligible. The display took us through to the present day where it illustrated that the bush skills of Aborigines are still used in the Northern Territory special military arm, Norforce.

The exhibition drew on a well coordinated range of material including archival sources which have been reproduced and brought to Darwin. The displays, which were predominantly photographic, were both well presented and of interesting content. The photographs were well selected and the accompanying texts were descriptive but not too exhaustive.

*Aborigines and the War* was a timely display of the Aboriginal contribution to the defence of Australia. Like many emerging Aboriginal histories there is much more to be told, and the Northern Territory University Library is to be congratulated for assembling an exhibition which I believe warrants a wider and more permanent presentation.

Greg Coleman  
Principal Archivist  
Northern Territory Archives Service



## Buildings

**Queensland State Archives.** 435 Compton Road, Runcorn, Queensland. Official opening: 20 January 1993.

Public sector architecture has entered a new age in Queensland with the completion of splendid new premises for the State Archives at Runcorn on the southern outskirts of Brisbane. While few Brisbanites, myself included, have previously had occasion to venture to the wilds of Runcorn (or lower Beaudesert as it seems from a map), the visit to the relocated State Archives is well worth the journey for a delightful sensory experience as well as one filled with professional novelty and interest.

Planning for this building, which began many years ago, has been a labour of love for the current State Archivist, Lee McGregor. Various sites have been examined over the years and plans devised without coming to fruition until the recent selection of land, with plenty of room for expansion, at Runcorn. Completed ahead of schedule by builders Graham Evans & Co, this 12,000 square metre building plus fittings were a cost to the public purse of \$23.65 million.

Architects Goodsir Baker Wilde Pty have designed a superbly functional and aesthetically delightful building displaying a clear understanding of, and empathy with, archival activities and responsibilities. It is, in my view, the best executed archives building I have seen in either Australia or North America. It is not a monument but rather public architecture at its best successfully integrating professional requirements with the traditions of the state. It provides a building uniquely recognisable as Queensland's state archival headquarters, but it is also a place for people to use and to feel at home in while at the same time effectively preserving the memory of the state and its people.

The Archives is in the midst of a developing residential area and has been designed for minimum impact. Yet as one approaches by the long sweeping drive, both its beauty and essentially Queensland character are instantly apparent. The external facade reflects the tradition of Queensland architecture, with soft sandstone bricks with a subtle tonal blend, and pergola and trellis gardens along the public entrance wall to give the traditional verandah appearance. The soft mauve and white of agapanthas in bloom greeted my arrival, to be supplemented in a few years by jacarandas and a host of native flora. All the public areas face or open out onto these garden areas with full use made of open glass (tinted, UV filtered) in these non-storage activity areas.

The building design features three levels (plus a basement), with the public and staff areas at the front of the building and the repository storage at the back. The storage areas are separated from the rest of the

building by a service core which houses air conditioning and wet areas. Total repository area is 5698 square metres, which includes several discrete and a number of special purpose repositories. Two passenger/goods lifts service the building, although stairs are central and easy to use when loads are not involved.

The interior design work is subtle but confident with the basic sea green, multi-coloured patterned carpet the core for inspiration. Each repository or functional area's colour scheme is based on one colour in the carpet — sea green, blue, muted yellow, pink, lilac, mulberry, etc. Shelving colours are predominantly shades in the musky pink to lilac or mauve spectrum with pleasant results to the eye and psyche — none of the loud oranges, reds or canary yellows of the 1980s here! To my eye and taste the tonal blends are superb as is the custom made colour coordinated furniture for each work or functional area.

The mastery of the interior design extends to both the public facilities and to the repositories. A Public Search Room with seating for sixty-eight people includes especially designed desks each with a modern overhead version of a library table light and complete with individual power points for lap-top computer use. A separate Microform Room accommodates twenty of the latest microfilm reader/printers as well as five microfiche readers and will operate largely as a self-help centre for genealogical researchers. Six sound-proof booths are available for the use of audio equipment together with a Research Interview Room, and an Audio Visual Room.



*The new premises of the Queensland State Archives at Runcorn. Public Entrance.*



*View of the Search Room at the new Queensland State Archives at Runcorn.*



*One of the specially designed storage units with adjacent sorting area, Queensland State Archives at Runcorn.*

A focal exhibition area extends the main foyer and is equipped with specially designed free standing display cases, which still had to be installed at the time of writing. Beyond is an excellent lecture/seminar room facility to seat 100 people in one large or two smaller rooms. A commercial kitchen is conveniently located adjacent to this facility. A comfortable public or researchers' lounge is also located in this module with access to the paved courtyard area.

While general office areas seem small and even crowded for a new building, the technical facilities for staff are excellent. The extensive conservation laboratory areas and bindery feature the latest equipment for micro-conservation work with a layout based on process. From this base the conservation staff monitor the building's computerised environmental monitoring system, but given current establishment numbers, would appear to have little time to try their skills or the full range of equipment on offer. A drying and fumigation room, photography room and microfilm room equipped with two 35 mm cameras and one 16 mm camera (but only one operator) completes this core of technical facilities.

For those of us who have been heard to remark that there is only so much shelving one can admire in an archival career, a surprise was just around the corner. The architects extended their designing talents to the coalface of archival activity resulting in some original and innovative shelving facilities, successfully translated by the shelving tenderer. These include specially designed card drawer storage units in three sizes with compatible mobile trolleys to facilitate relocation and enable movement from the repository to the search room, custom-made pigeon holed shelving for the extensive holdings of rolled maps, deep shelving suitable for large registers (Colonial Secretary's Office), and racked shelving for computer tapes.

It is impossible to list all the noteworthy features of this Aladdin's Cave for archivists. Their sum total together with such aesthetically pleasing surroundings becomes quite overwhelming. Yet some dichotomies exist. The absence of computers is astounding in 1993 and control records remain primarily in card format, housed in banks of bright new library card drawers over an area which has had computer cabling laid in the slab floor. Staff numbers remain low and it is apparent that many of these superb facilities will not be fully utilised until establishment numbers are increased. The most obvious example of this being the search room facilities.

Researchers are set quite a task in locating the new premises, as there is no direct public transport to the facility. The nearest infrequent bus necessitates a lengthy rather unsafe walk along a major arterial road as yet without footpaths and gutters. The compensation for drivers is extensive car parking and the satisfaction of a day's outing in the bush.

For those familiar with the previous Queensland State Archives facility at Dutton Park, in the shadow of Boggo Road Gaol, the Runcorn premises represent a quantum leap. The building was opened by the Premier of Queensland, the Hon. Wayne Goss at a delightfully low-key and suitably 'Queensland' style of ceremony on 20 January 1993. It is a building of which the Premier and the State Archivist can be justifiably proud. This building has set the standard for archives in this country.

Glenda I. Acland  
University Archivist and  
Coordinator Records Management  
The University of Queensland

**Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office.** 2 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Opened August 1992.

The Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office, moved in August 1992 from Brighton to its new premises, 'Casselden Place', 2 Lonsdale Street, in the hubbub of central Melbourne. Welcoming workers and visitors with an open portico supported by heavy squared columns, this impressive building stands on a corner. Its facade sports marble tiling and many windows chase around the upper floors which converge on a central rocket-like tower surrounded by an open roof area. Given the lack of parking, it is best to approach by train to Parliament Station or take a tram up Bourke Street and walk past tempting cafes and the Princess Theatre.

The visitor steps through the electronic glass doors into a gleaming spacious foyer. Stairs wind away on the right to the upper echelons. A squat directory board sits far in front across the void. To the right are the elevator bays at the building's core. Listed under Department of Administrative Services the Australian Archives Office is on the second floor.

The public domain begins with the reception area. Conservative in colour and tonality, the decor comprises soft grey-greens and flecks of mauve. Both Reference and Search Rooms are visible from the reception desk so that staff can control initial public inquiries, mail, record deliveries and returns, reference orders and photocopying. To the left is a concealed storage area with compactus bays containing the records and registers which are permanently held on-site. This also acts as the temporary retention area for the deliveries of records requested by researchers.

A glass-walled interview room is screened by slimline blinds. Behind it to the right another door leads to the information services staff area, which, like the administrative area, is separated from the public.

The Reference Room is accessed through an electronically locked door controlled by reception. Its open plan begins with three computers and two microfiche readers on a long work station facing the Access and Information Services staff offices. Blocks of low bookshelves containing finding aids, registers, government publications and guides are located in the centre so that the view of Lonsdale Street is unobstructed. Parallel with the windows, research desks face an alcove of taller shelves of historical and technical reference books. Microfilm readers are situated at the back of the room. Behind them is the Official Search Room. The Reference Room, light and airy, provides public work stations. Both the Reference and Search Rooms are surveyed by security cameras linked to reception.

Directly opposite the windows and behind the reception staff area, the Public Search Room can only be entered from the Reference Room through another electronically locked door. In this small but adequate space there are twelve seats in the central area and three small self-contained rooms for researchers requiring power points and noise control. A generous table is supplied for viewing large format records and plans. Here ends the public domain. Public toilets are located outside of the office near the elevator bays.

The administrative staff area may be accessed either through the Reference Room or from outside the office on the other side of the building's core. The Staff Room is the first room on the right from the Reference Room, directly behind the Public Search Room. Continuing along the passageway, a series of executive offices overlooking the streets lead to a large open work area furnished with work stations. These offer privacy for the low screens prevent distraction while still allowing for some conversation and views of the outside world. Altogether it is a light and airy working environment. A large processing room is separated by walls toward the core of the building, creating a somewhat boxy room in comparison. Curving to left and further to the core of the building is the Conference Room with boardroom table, ample seating and privacy, as well as access to public and private toilets.

Both the staff and administrators recognise some disadvantages in the layout of the building. One is the physical divide between the offices of the Information Services staff and the administrative staff. As the main staff room is located in the administrative service area, the Information Services staff must cross the great divide either through the Reference Room or by exiting the office and re-entering near the Conference Room. Depending upon the caffeine requirement, this could prove disturbing to the researchers and frustrating for the workers — not to mention the complicated access to toilets, staff or otherwise. Another problem is the delay in receiving records, which takes twenty-four hours from Dandenong.

Hours of careful deliberation over layout, workflow and office plan are apparent in this office. Most of the problems have arisen from the physical characteristics of the structure itself — its wrapping around in a mazy fashion away from the core. These are balanced by attributes such as natural light and the resultant air of spaciousness which is good for the workers. As for the users — it is advisable to contact the office prior to a visit and approach via public transport with hot flask in hand and plenty of waiting time.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Acknowledgement is due for the cooperation of the Information Services staff of Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office, for the enlightening tour through their maze.

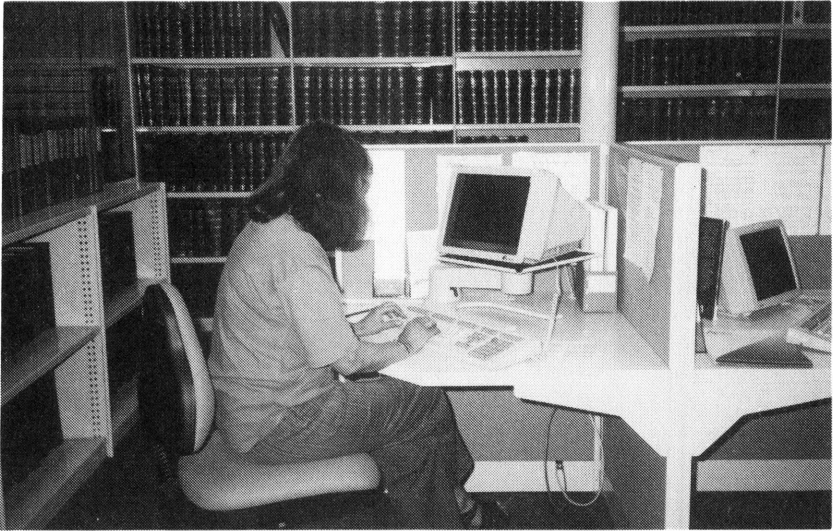
**Australian Archives, NSW Regional Office, Sydney Office and Search Room.** Sydney Central, Level 17, 477 Pitt Street, Sydney. Opened August 1992.

The NSW Regional Office of Australian Archives moved into its new city office accommodation in late 1992. It occupies one floor of the new 'Sydney Central' office building, which has been built by the Commonwealth as the intended accommodation for some of the major offices of federal agencies in Sydney. The move to the new site, and the fit-out, was managed by Robert French, Manager of Program Support at AA NSW.

This new proximity to upstream clients is one of the principal advantages of the move. The new site is on the southern fringe of the CBD, close to the main public transport centre and thus convenient for staff. It also has wonderful views, especially to the west over the suburbs towards the Blue Mountains, which get their name from the smog which obscures them from view much of the time.

The first impressions of a visitor to the new premises (who is also familiar with the former offices at Market Street) is of spaciousness. In fact this is an illusion — the new space totals only about 900 m<sup>2</sup>, down from over 1200 m<sup>2</sup> at Market Street — but the layout and decor opportunities of a new building, larger floor areas, and careful design work have resulted in a much better place to work.

By reducing the archives stack from over 1800 linear metres of fixed shelving to less than 400 of compactus, it has been possible to fit the whole office onto a single floor. At Market Street, it was spread over two floors and sometimes felt like two different offices. The only archives now held in the City are those used virtually every day. All



*Australian Archives, NSW Regional Office. Researcher consulting automatic finding aids in the reference services area. Photo: Mark Stevens.*

other requests are ferried in from Villawood on demand. The service standard is 48 hours, although this is frequently bettered. One wonders whether an improvement to a 24-hour service *guarantee* (which is not the same as a standard) could be introduced. There is no reference service at Villawood. The building contains secure dockways which are linked directly by lifts to the upper floors, so the flow of archives into the office is straightforward, another advance on Market Street which did not have a proper dock at all.

Access to staff-only areas is controlled by a card security system. The building also has its own security including guards.

Arriving at level 17 in one of the excellent high-speed lifts, one is deposited in the foyer which contains wall-mounted display cases and some soft furniture. At one end is the enquiries counter, from one side of which curious visitors can observe the reference area through a glass wall. The dominant colours, carried from the foyer right through the offices, are Australian Archives blue (I predict corporate uniforms within five years, and a good thing too), with grey carpet and touches of jasmine, white and burgundy. Furniture is light-coloured wood, or pale laminate. The whole impression is subdued and tasteful in a corporate sort of way, and will probably last well.

The office can be thought of as 'u-shaped', with the lifts, foyer and plant rooms in the middle, and the office itself around the edge of three sides of the building. The reference area occupies one end, then staff work areas, with amenities (lunch area, conference room, toilets etc) at





*Australian Archives, NSW Regional Office. Staff workroom and office area. Photo: Mark Stevens.*

the other end. There are twenty-three staff normally based in the city office. The main staff working area is open-plan, with individual desks near the windows. In addition to the cabling for the MacIntosh and PC computers on nearly all desktops, power poles were installed to serve the grouped common equipment: scanners, printers, and mainframe terminals.

Managerial offices are not located in the traditional corner window positions, but on the inside of the staff work area, without external windows of their own, but with glass walls, and blinds for privacy.

The possible layouts for the office were circumscribed by the positions of service rooms and ducts, and the limited area that could take the floor loading imposed by mobile shelving. Another important factor which affected layout planning was the direction of the best views, including considerations of future building on adjacent blocks.

The Search Room is thirty per cent larger than at Market Street, and there are now separate rooms for microfilm readers and 'official' researchers. Finding aids (both manual and automated) can be consulted in a reference area to one side of the main reading room, and there is space for interviewing new researchers. These enlarged spaces should be able to cope easily with the expected continuing growth in reference demand for some years to come.

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## Briefly Noted

Anne Robertson, compiler, *Directory of Australian Ephemera Collections. A Listing of Institutions and Individuals in Australia Collecting Ephemera*. State Library of New South Wales, 1992 (available gratis from The Legal Deposit and Ephemera Librarian, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000).

This *Directory* of 87 public institutions and fifteen individuals holding or collecting ephemera serves, as much as anything else, to highlight the anomalous position ephemera occupies in Australian documentary heritage and archives in particular.

As noted in the *Introduction*, many significant institutions responded to the questionnaire, which formed the basis of the *Listing*, with the caveat that while ephemera might constitute a part of the holdings of records no separate 'ephemera collection' could be isolated for inclusion in this *Directory*. Ephemera is perceived by these institutions as intrinsic to the record series or group, and justifiably as it represents in some way the creating agency's activities. What then is the nature of ephemera of which the *Directory* aims to promote a greater understanding.

The definition of a record as ephemera is perhaps a convenient way of controlling material that comes to us divorced from context (the context of creation, decisions that led to creation and so on). I think it important to note that it is the (artificial) form of arrangement forced by alienation from context and not the item or record itself that gives us the term ephemera and thus ephemera collections.

These reflections aside let us turn to the contents of the *Directory*. There appears to be adequate national coverage. Arrangement is alphabetical and divided between institutions and individual. Of the sixteen fields per entry obviously the most illuminating are those that deal with the scope and format of collections. Scope I take to mean subject or subjects — these might be defined by geography, creating agency, events, theme and the like. A good general idea of the ephemera holdings of institutions and individuals can be gleaned from this field, although in most cases any indication of date range is absent. I must admit puzzlement in finding such things as manuscripts, photographs, maps, annual reports and staff journals recorded in the format field along with things like leaflets, badges and the like. Again we strike the problem of definition and context — what is ephemera?<sup>1</sup>

The enormous diversity of methods of arrangement and cataloguing/indexing used by institutions to register or describe material also points to vagaries in the understanding of ephemera.

As a preliminary investigation into the status of ephemera in Australian recorded documentary heritage the *Directory* is timely. I

doubt that the compiler's hope of seeing the *Directory* 'encourage cooperation among institutions in the rationalisation of their collections' will be realised for a great many years to come, if ever. For researchers and historians the book may prove to be a valuable source for locating supplementary and illustrative materials.

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1. Editor's note: *Keeping Archives II Glossary* provides the following definition of *ephemera* — Items of a transient nature and low value which are expected to have a brief currency. They are usually printed or manufactured in quantity for a specific event or activity and are intended neither to survive the topicality of that event or activity nor to survive as original records. They may be retained for their information or as graphic specimens particularly for exhibitions.

**National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea.**  
*Advisory Services to Government Departments and Others.* Port Moresby. 1992. 46 pp. ISBN 9980 911 42 5.

This publication aims to assist records officers in government agencies with their obligations in the archives/records management field. The booklet is well set-out with clear headings, no index — but a comprehensive two-page *Contents List*. It is evidently the work of more than one author — the differing styles interrupt the general flow of the text.

The information provided is an overview of principles and practices for clients all working within a communal culture — the PNG public service. Consequently the use of in-house jargon expresses the familiar to the knowing, but offers little difficulty for an outsider. Throughout, the role of the National Archives and its staff is stressed in initiating and maintaining contact in all phases of activity — records systems; appraisal and disposal; conservation — including storage, microfilming, warehousing, computerisation. Such a sustained joint venture deserves success.

In its interpretation of broad concepts, e.g. 'appraisal' and 'disposal', a very narrow version has been translated to clients. Appraisal is virtually equated to the final check on an itemised file listing for destruction and, with the interchange of disposal and disposition schedule, the major impression is that a disposal schedule again equated to an itemised file list for destruction. This is slightly salvaged by the appearance of a general disposal schedule in the appendices. However, it would be too easy to criticise that document when presented in such a bland manner, ie no explanatory notes of the style

of information to be destroyed (or kept) within the categories/subjects listed.

In both the records systems and computerisation area, principles are again dovetailed into very specific preferences and practices, and, particularly with computerisation, border on prescriptive.

In total, this publication points to the major elements in an archives/records management program and stresses the need for a continuing relationship between guiding institution and its clients. This is its greatest strength.

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