

Reviews

Edited by Sue McKemmish

Publications

Angelika Menne-Haritz, *Information Handling in Offices and Archives*. Munchen, London, Paris, New York: K. G. Saur, 1993. ISBN 3 598 11146 0. \$76 (available from D. W. Thorpe, PO Box 146, Port Melbourne, 3207).

In October 1991 near the German university town of Marburg a seminar on new information technologies and their impact on recordkeeping in the workplace and in archives took place. A number of leading practitioners in the field presented papers which have been published in the title under review. The authors represented are all senior archives administrators and information managers or academics in related fields. None came from the information technology industry itself. The countries represented at the seminar were Britain, Canada, France, Germany (west), the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States (five of the twelve speakers). The seminar was sponsored by the VW Foundation, a remarkable fact to an Australian archivist.

The book consists of a masterly introduction to the papers and summary of discussion by the editor, Angelika Menne-Haritz, and the papers themselves. It is a pity that it has taken nearly three years to publish the papers. If I had heard the papers in 1991 I would have found them a revelation for this book is filled with sound advice. Is it fair therefore in 1994 to be irritated by reiteration of sound advice and to find the few case study discussions quaintly out of date?

Fair or not, that is my reaction, so I have tried to analyse why. The first reason is the fact that there is very little new here for anyone grappling with management of electronic systems in the workplace nor for anyone with a cursory acquaintance with the ballooning literature on the subject. Second, if this seminar is any indication, is the recognition that we were talking only to ourselves on the subject in 1991 and we still are today.¹ Third is a consequence of the second, impatience that we are still proclaiming the worthiness of an

archival approach to electronic system management whether or not anyone else is listening.

It leads me to wonder whom are we trying to convince? Senior management? — you still need archivists, don't abolish our jobs. IT practitioners? — you don't know anything about records and you'll trip up if you ignore the experts, us! Or archivists who feel bewildered by current developments and want reassurance, or others whom we, the 'enlightened ones', think are hiding their heads in the sand.

I have much sympathy for any archivist feeling overwhelmed, depressed or bored with the now voluminous literature on electronic information management. Trying to keep up with the literature is another imposition on an ever increasing workload. I can understand many archivists being dismayed by the domination of the subject in our few forums. At the same time the information world we work in is changing so rapidly it is imperative that archivists come to grips with electronic records, not just to keep our jobs but to ensure we can hand on the evidence of what is happening today to the next generation. In this context this book has an aura of unreality which is not helpful.

Charles Dollar tells us 'Archivists should identify and articulate to information systems designers and software developers archival requirements for the capture of essential context information' (p. 59). No doubt, but why would they take any notice? This and other exhortations from Dollar imply development of software in-house or under control of the agency. On the contrary, the trend today is towards off-the-shelf software with little customising and certainly the likes of Microsoft is not going to heed the advice of archivists (who?). Similarly Richard Barry argues 'IT managers thus need the prodding and assistance of archivists and records managers in better understanding and articulating system requirements for electronic management... Archivists and records managers should not wait to be asked but should exercise leadership themselves. They must enter into a "strategic alliance" with their IT colleagues' (p. 40). He offers no advice about how to strike this strategic alliance nor why the aforesaid colleagues would see any advantage in it for themselves.

A similar air of unreality pervades some comments on the impact of new technology on the nature of work. Menne-Haritz's view that 'the scope of clerical jobs is becoming much broader and more varied' (p. 12) seems ironic. In fact the trends in automation of office procedures is going the other way. Workflow software is rigidly controlling transactions performed by clerks in

industries like insurance and banking and is creeping into government areas. In the process the clerical jobs are disappearing. In such cases the organisation's need for control over the process is demanding better records of who did what, when.

I suspect this trend which will be boosted by the privacy and data protection codes which are likely to be adopted in all Australian states in the next few years. The counter tendency for software to provide customised applications and greater freedom for individual initiative is not as strong as it may have seemed in 1991. Organisations outside banking and insurance seem to be pushing for more standardisation in response to the sense they were losing control of what their workers were doing. This has been a major impetus to the proliferation of electronic document management software packages.

The seminar participants cannot be blamed for not guessing what direction the technology trend is taking. On the other hand have the areas of concern they identified been addressed? The general question of control and prevention of loss of data/information looms large throughout the papers. The contrast between the Europeans' response to the issue—reliance on adherence to policy and procedures and the orderly conduct of business—and the North Americans' technological solution—automate the capture of the necessary context information and records—is striking. The number of software companies addressing this with electronic document management packages suggests that the automated solution is being sought and supplied in Australia.

I wonder if the same concern would be expressed today or whether the question has been replaced by concern to ensure orderly disposal of data/records takes place. It was surprising to me that the 1989 Canadian IMOSA project (to manage electronic documents on a local area network) did not initially address the disposal and archival issues but left it to subsequent phases of the project. The reported success in 'harmonising the electronic system with the corporate paper-based records system' (p. 145) from the IMOSA project was interesting, not least because they did not identify the problem of integration of paper and electronic records as significant. It is now clear that this problem of the transition from paper to electronic has not been resolved and the transition itself will take longer than thought in 1989.

In relation to discussing control and capture of electronic records, Richard Barry makes a distinction between 'structured data' in what he calls application systems and 'unstructured text' (p.50) in electronic mail or other free text systems. The former he argues is 'amenable to mass retention scheduling' while the latter 'requires document level application retention

scheduling'. While disposal at the document (singular) level is not a appropriate strategy, the terms and distinction he has made struck me as illuminating.

I would argue that the approach to disposal currently taken by many of the software purveyors is inappropriate because of the focus on the individual document detached from its action context. This raises the issue of linking electronic records to their context which is a major preoccupation of these papers where the traditional concept of 'provenance' is put forward as the solution. What was emerging in 1991 is now the central debate—the issue of what is a record and its subset, evidence *versus* information. A mixture of views is represented in the papers, but the lines of the current debate are only just discernible.

The Europeans more readily draw out the political implications of the new technologies than do the North Americans, seeing the opportunities for greater accountability. A Dutch study of use of electronic mail between government ministries and Parliament speculated that 'MP's could have access to ministerial databases by using the electronic mail facilities: the transparent ministry' (Victor Bekkers, p. 104), a prospect to strike fear into the hearts of the Sir Humphreys in all countries. A German study by Heinrich Reinermann gave another example: 'A county, in charge of vehicle registration, converted its paper files to optical storage devices. Having made those files ubiquitous this way, it was possible to open up additional offices and to leave it to the car owners in which of the offices they wanted to register their vehicles' (p. 110). Reinermann goes on to comment: 'decisions about a working technique having as severe political implications as modern information technology has, must be the matter of regular public managers [not a] side-hierarchy for EDP'.

Given such comments the summary of the discussion about data privacy regulation was surprising. Menne-Haritz reports 'data privacy legislation often goes further than intended or even needed, and can actually be a handicap by spoiling the cooperative atmosphere of mutual trust between citizen and administration' (p. 15), a comment which seems insensitive only two years after the collapse of East Germany. Data privacy legislation and other regulatory demands on electronic systems offer an opportunity for archivists and records managers to present the case for better recordkeeping. Compliance with external standards is one of the few weapons we have, and on the issues of protecting people's personal information we have to be seen on the side of the angels, not the side of the state or private corporations.

Finally there seemed very little recognition of the impact of economics on what we are all doing, yet the reality of the severe worldwide recession should have been visible by October 1991. Can the Swedish archival administrators hope to impose the stringent requirements on government agencies for the sake of the archives when their state is under international pressure to cut its budget deficit? Some of the recommendations about standardisation will be boosted by the demands to cut costs. Trends towards use of workflow software mentioned here are strengthened by the managerial imperative to reduce the payroll. Our claims, both for our own jobs and for the recordkeeping requirements we consider imperative, will have to be cost justified and argued for on the basis of compliance with external standards and of risk management. In this context the arguments about the efficacy of provenance and the assertion that only archivists can make judgments about disposal dominating this book seem quaint hangovers from another era.

Anne Picot

Corporate Archivist

Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW

Endnote

- 1 Compare the comments made by Barbara Reed in her review of Margaret Hedstrom (ed.), *Electronic Records Management Program Strategies* in the last *Archives and Manuscripts* reporting from 1993.

Glenda Acland, editor, *Electronic Recordkeeping: Issues and Perspectives. Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 1, May 1994, 276 pp. ISSN 0157-6895. \$30 (available from Australian Society of Archivists Inc., PO Box 83, O'Connor, ACT 2601).

In her editorial introduction to *Electronic Recordkeeping Issues and Perspectives*, Glenda Acland concurs with David Bearman that the essential challenge facing contemporary archivists is one of 'how to transform information systems into recordkeeping systems, and to reinvent the profession along the way'. In their own way each of the contributions which follows reflects upon this challenge. By virtue of their complementarity, few aspects of electronic recordkeeping escape scrutiny.

David Roberts in 'Defining Electronic Records, Documents and Data' adopts an approach to electronic recordkeeping analogous to Wittgenstein's in philosophy. Roberts insists on rigour in our use of language and suggests that clear understandings of the defining characteristics of records, documents and data are essential if we are to work successfully in the new information

technology environment. Specifically, our understanding of a record has significant impact on what we understand as an electronic record. Outcomes from Roberts' analysis are that electronic recordkeeping systems form a subset of electronic information systems, that an archivally significant computer based information system need not (but in many instances will) comprise an electronic recordkeeping system and that electronic records form a small part of the universe of electronic documents. Rather than merely an exercise in linguistics, Roberts' analysis has significant implications for program delivery, particularly if the view is taken that only electronic recordkeeping systems should be the focus of archival intervention and management strategy.

David Bearman in 'Managing Electronic Mail' applies the notion of electronic recordkeeping to a particular case of electronic information systems, which in practice mostly do not meet the functional requirements for electronic recordkeeping, but increasingly assume accountability significance in organisations and society at large. In common with his previous work, he illuminates not only the problem but a theoretical framework for solving it. Of particular interest is the discussion of the X400/500 data interchanges standards, 'which could accommodate contextual and structural information needed for reconstruction of evidential historicity', and Bearman's ideas for style sheets at applications level for record and non-record documents. While difficult for archivists new to the electronic records environment, 'Managing Electronic Mail' is essential reading for anyone interested in the broad parameters of a non-expert system based solution to the problem of electronic mail, and is further evidence of the importance of work in this area currently emerging from the University of Pittsburgh.

From the discussion of concepts, principles, standards and tactics we move to the first of the case studies with Anne Picot's account of 'Electronic Records Systems in the Roads & Traffic Authority, NSW'. Anne describes the real scope for archival intervention in systems design as it currently exists, i.e. within large mainframe systems where regulatory (audit) and data disposition requirements create opportunities for archival intervention. In common with other commentators, she sees us as being in a transitional phase to a predominantly digital society, a phase in which systems design and implementation is dominated by IT professionals who are not equipped with the perspectives of life cycle data management and electronic recordkeeping (the long run view), and more concerned with meeting the immediate information management objectives of organisations (the short run view). As organisations grapple with accountability issues in the transitional phase, Picot's work, in common with Bearman's, suggests a window of opportunity for archivists who traditionally have articulated the long run view.

The case study repertoire is further extended by Greg O'Shea in 'The Medium is *not* the Message: Appraisal of Electronic Records by Australian Archives'. Greg describes appraisal and disposal work conducted by Australian Archives on electronic recordkeeping systems in the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Once again the emphasis is on management strategies in the mainframe environment, rather than the increasingly common distributed environment. Essentially, this article expands on work first unveiled as part of the highly successful *Managing Electronic Records* seminar in 1993. O'Shea concludes with a salutary message—that we must re-examine traditional thinking and practice in relation to core archival functions if we wish to be key players in the information age.

Dagmar Parer and Keith Parrott's 'Management Practices in the Electronic Records Environment' similarly expands on work earlier presented as part of *Managing Electronic Records*. Their work is significant in terms of what Bearman describes as tactics which might be employed as a consequence of the functional requirements for electronic recordkeeping. The focus here is on data management principles forming the basis of an agency's information management policy, together with the identification of document attributes necessary for electronic document management in a distributed information management environment which might be incorporated in system design. Parer and Parrott develop their theoretical framework with succinct and easily understood language which belies the significance of what they have to say, and which other authors inclined to embellishment would do well to study. Collectively, the work of Parer, Parrott and Rob Smith-Roberts represents Australia's original contribution to the electronic records dialogue, and in many respects this article provides an excellent synopsis of this work.

The challenge of the distributed or decentralised information management environment is also the subject of Jenni Davidson and Louisa Moscato's 'Towards an Electronic Records Management Program: The University of Melbourne'. Notable features of the University of Melbourne's program include integration of electronic records management into university wide information technology strategic planning, and the development of a 'datastore' facility, described as an 'inexpensive repository for data that can be accessed anywhere on the University network'. Since the Universities of Melbourne and Queensland appear to be the only Australian Universities currently taking electronic records management with any degree of seriousness, further work from Jenni and Louisa is awaited with interest.¹ A more comprehensive explanation of the electronic records depository or datastore in particular would be welcome, since *prima facie*, this would seem to provide a locus for archival data management.

The emphasis in this volume on electronic recordkeeping in organisations, in itself a reflection of where the current modest level of activity is to be found in the real world, is counter balanced by Adrian Cunningham's 'The Archival Management of Personal Records in Electronic Form: Some Suggestions'. The main focus here is archival data management of personal records primarily, but not exclusively, consisting of word processing documents. Cunningham debates the controversial ACLIS recommendation that manuscript libraries should not attempt to provide archival data management for personal records, but rather should insist on hardware and software independent conventional paper (text) format for transfers. Foremost among ACLIS's critics is the ANU's Social Science Data Archives which argues that 'collecting institutions have to grasp the nettle and commence preservation of records in electronic format'. Discounting the argument of whether a data library or archives solution should apply to this class of electronic documents, it is difficult to understand how such a technologically Neanderthal position can have the status of recommended practice in an age where many authors have modem based access to networks such as the Internet, and hence the capability of ASCII type up-load to an electronic depository.

The place of Australian theory and practice in the burgeoning international literature on electronic records management is the subject of Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish's literature review 'Somewhere Beyond Custody'. The view conveyed is of an embryonic electronic records management perspective which is at once both evolutionary and revolutionary in world terms—evolutionary in the sense of growing from the notions of Jenkinson and life cycle management, revolutionary in that it pioneers non-custodial strategies. Anticipating perhaps the inevitable reaction to come to the transformation of archives management from within the archives community itself, Upward and McKemmish conclude with a timely and reassuring message—that the goal remains the establishment for continuing use of the record of social and organisational activity.

Notwithstanding the at times naive discussion of issues in the distributed information processing environment, an impression gained from the substantive and well researched nature of contributions to *Electronic Recordkeeping: Issues and Perspectives* is that we are indeed at the beginnings of reinventing ourselves and transforming archives management in the process. In such a process of reinvention, where the body of knowledge we identify with archives is moving to absorb what some regard as mainstream information or even computer science, it can reasonably be expected that a crisis of identity and conservative reaction from within the archives community loom. An important question, therefore, which the archives

community in Australia must address, is that of how it can best ensure cohesion as it undergoes the metamorphosis necessary if it is to survive into the twenty-first century.

Mark Brogan
Lecturer, Archives Studies
Edith Cowan University

Endnote

- ¹ The University of Queensland's ERM contribution to CASMAC recently attracted favourable comment from George McLoughlin, the AVCC Project Manager, during an Electronic Records SIG meeting at the Townsville Annual General Meeting of ASA Inc. in May 1994.

Arnita A. Jones and Philip L. Cantelon, *Corporate Archives and History: Making the Past Work*. Malabar, Florida. Krieger Publishing Company, 1993. 211 pp. ISBN 0 89464 353 3. Price not known (available from Krieger Publishing Company, Krieger Drive, Malabar, Fl 32950, USA).

Corporate archives are generally more neglected than most in the literature; it is therefore interesting to see a new book on the topic. This anthology is aimed primarily at corporate managers with responsibility for records, and to a secondary market as an introduction for students entering the profession—it is 'designed to offer a basic overview of the value of corporate history' with case studies to 'assist corporations in developing an archival/records management/historical program best suited for their needs'.

The book is divided into four segments: getting started, managing corporate memory, professional concerns, and the value of corporate history, and draws together a number of essays dating from 1981. Although dated, these essays set the scene well. One of these articles puts forward some interesting and still valid points for the tyro reader on the effect of technological change on corporate memory.

The usual reasons of self-understanding, strategic advantage, public relations and records management are set out for the establishment of archival programs. But these are offset with the need to balance public enquiry with long-term needs and cost efficiency. Case studies illustrate the diversity of archival need and emphasise outreach, particularly within the company. (Even when an archival program is well known within a company there is always a need to restate its existence.)

The need to establish environmental archives is briefly discussed in the context of protection against litigation. US legislation establishes 'Potentially Responsible Parties' dealing with hazardous waste and the essay points to a need for these PRPs to have adequately organised records. That records such as purchase orders for toxic materials may need to be produced to be balanced with records of materials sent for disposal will create an interesting dilemma for archivists in this area of operation. (Perhaps archivists should be looking carefully at their own records for disposal of even small amounts of toxic materials from conservation laboratories.)

For those responsible for deciding to establish an archival program and for students the book achieves its aim.

T. J. Hart
Group Archivist
ANZ Banking Group

Ann Moyal, *Portraits in Science*. National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1994. 203 pp. ISBN 0 642 10616.9. Published with the assistance of the Morris West Trust Fund. \$23.95 (available from the National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT 2600).

I have to confess that I came to this latest addition to the stable of important works from Ann Moyal, one of Australia's most important historians of science and technology, with a considerable bias towards the focus of the book. After ten years of concentrated work on the archives of science and technology in Australia, I had developed a detailed knowledge of the workings of a few scientists and the archival records they produced and a smattering of awareness of the careers of many thousands of individuals and summaries of the records they have left behind. However, in all that time, as I was mostly just working with records, I rarely had the opportunity to learn more about the personal stories behind the records (even the personal and family records) from the perspective of the individual.

The understanding of archival records is based upon the documentation of the context of their creation, and an important, need I say necessary, task of the archivist is to ensure that the context is preserved with the records. It is reasonable to assert that much of the attention of archivists is on the more formal aspects of organisation or life structure through administrative histories, chronologies and stylised biographies, ignoring the drives,

motivations and creative urges which underpin the landmarks of a career. *Portraits in Science* has captured some of that more elusive and highly subjective information for a selection of twelve individuals covering a broad cross-section of contemporary scientific culture in Australia.

Moyal's task on this project was to interview a selection of Australian scientists, edit the transcripts and draw together, in the introduction, an overview of the nature of science as a cultural force in our society, looking at the colours, shapes, textures and spin that can only be examined through the capture of the personal histories of the people involved. In a society that is becoming obsessed with privacy, that is tending, in some instances, to reduce our cultural record to a set of statistics, it is refreshing and reassuring that there are still participants willing to commit information about their private lives to the public record. Moyal's work is a service of great value to historians and other researchers of the future, but *Portraits in Science* is also a darn good read and contributes much to the discourse of Australian science. It is full of surprises and like most good books raises more questions than it answers.

The project was initiated by the National Library of Australia and forms the third in a growing series of compilations of oral history interviews focusing on particular aspects of Australian cultural and creative life. Moyal chose well, covering a sweep of our large and diverse scientific community through the careful selection of special individuals who had made a significant contribution in their field. From the well known and prominent Sir Gustav Nossal and Robyn Williams, to the less well known palynologist Elizabeth Truswell, *Portraits in Science* covers medical research, animal genetics, physics, earth sciences, agricultural and environmental research and science communication. Of note is the lack of a chemist in the line-up, particularly given the inclusion of four physicists. Of the twelve, three are women which probably reflects the percentage that have managed to climb the scientific ladder to positions of prominence. Two interviews, with the physicists Mark Oliphant and Harry Messel, were not conducted by Moyal but by the redoubtable Hazel de Berg in 1967 and 1972 respectively, although Moyal did reinterview Oliphant. All the Moyal interviews were conducted in a five month period from December 1992 to April 1993 and not only capture some of the spirit of those times but also Moyal's particular interests, notably the role of science policy in contemporary Australian politics and women in science. However, with one exception, it is these sections of the interviews that are the least successful.

A clear difference in philosophy of the oral historians is evident from the juxtaposition of the de Berg and Moyal transcripts of interview as de Berg

removed the interviewer from the edited transcripts while Moyal presented the interview as the discourse that it was. How much was edited out of the original interviews we do not know but the overall structure of the Moyal conversations gives a good guide to budding oral historians to help them understand the anatomy of a successful interview and the signs that indicate an interview that is failing.

Portraits in Science is highly recommended for all archivists with some dealings in the records of science and technology in Australia although its audience should be much wider than that small group. Many historians of science have been employing oral history as an important tool in the research armoury and for those that are new to the field this book provides an excellent starting point to glean insight into the process. Both Moyal and the National Library of Australia are to be congratulated on the success of the project and the quality of the final product.

Gavan McCarthy
Chief Archivist
Australian Science Archives Project

John Thompson, editor, *The People's Treasures: Collections in the National Library of Australia, Canberra*. National Library of Australia, 1993. 81 pp. ISBN 0 624 105979. \$16 (available from National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT 2600).

Published to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the opening of the National Library's building by the then Prime Minister, J. G. Gorton, *The People's Treasures* is a worthy sequel to the *National Library of Australia* (1968), produced by the library to mark the acquisition — after sixty-seven years of a gypsy-like existence — of its own building which was once described by its architect, Sir Walter Bunning, as a 'calm quiet edifice of heroic scale to grace its setting in the broad landscaped sweep of its beautiful lake-side site'. Unlike the earlier tome which concentrated on the building and the services provided by the library, *The People's Treasures* focuses on 'books and more than books', as the editor puts it in the Introduction. The title of the book derives from an exhibition, put together by the library to celebrate the 'efforts of the many individual collectors who have contributed to the enrichment of its holdings in a wide and diverse range of formats'. For all that the book is not—nor does it claim to be—a definitive account of the library's collections or even of all its significant materials; rather, through a sampling of its various treasures and

icons it tries to provide understanding of the library's history and its evolution from an insignificant collection of books serving the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne to the 'complex collecting institution' of today.

There are seven contributors, three of whom come from the National Library. The Manuscript Librarian Graeme Powell has written about the library's rich collection of personal papers; Margaret Dent, most recently a Senior Librarian in the Information Services Branch, has given us an inspiring account of the Rare Book Collection; and Andrew Gosling, Chief Librarian in the Asian Collection Section, has penned an essay called 'A Journey to Asia' describing the library's extensive Asian collections which increasingly underpin and reflect Australia's developing relations with the Asia-Pacific region. All are well written, but my vote goes to Powell for the following quotation, from the journals of one Alexander Weynton which describe several voyages of merchant ships from England to Australia around the middle of the last century. 'I must certainly say', wrote Weynton after attending a ball in Sydney, 'that several of the girls are exceedingly pretty but they had large feet and have the peculiar lack of animation which distinguished all Australian women. They danced violently but not well'.

The four non-library contributors are Stuart Macintyre, Ernest Scott Professor of History at the University of Melbourne and a member of the National Library Council, who has written a brief but elegant history of the library and its collections — 'a sedimentary record of how the nation was conceived and of the shifting understanding of the national heritage'; Jonathan Wantrup, a leading antiquarian expert who has contributed an essay on his speciality, the Australian 'incunabula'; and Australian National University's art historian Sascha Grishin whose 'Australia's Cultural Heritage: The Visual Record' is a glowing tribute to the library's collection of paintings, prints, drawings and other graphic materials — 'the envy of most art galleries in Australia'. The last non-librarian to contribute was the Associate Professor in Applied Geography at the University of Canberra, Terry Birtles; his 'Rare Maps in Context' is an overview of the library's extensive holdings of maps which attempts to place maps into context as 'documents to be read, used and interpreted to better understand the nature and achievement of human enterprise in various forms'.

The work is handsomely produced and the illustrations, 'selected for their intrinsic interest, historical significance or rarity', are both fitting and technically up to scratch. As for the contents, my only quibble—a very minor one—is with the somewhat cavalier treatment given to the man who was largely responsible for the acquisition of most of the treasures catalogued in

the book, Sir Harold White, Commonwealth National Librarian (later National Librarian) from 1947 to 1970. He deserves better than the two brief mentions on pages 24 and 64 — after all, as Dan Sprod has recently demonstrated (in *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, September 1993) it was Sir Harold who was single-handedly responsible for the grandeur and 'heroic scale' of the building whose 25th anniversary *The People's Treasures* was published to celebrate. Dan Sprod, one of Sir Harold's lieutenants, recalls the crucial meeting of the committee dealing with the planning of the new library building where the chairman of the National Capital Development Commission, Sir John Overall, announced that the library's expectations were quite unrealistic and that it would have to be 'content with a building of modest dimensions and one which, in the library's opinion, was likely to be unimaginative and incapable of projecting a national image'. On this note, writes Sprod, the meeting adjourned to the following day. On resumption

the Chairman, without preamble, resumed his presentation. It became rapidly clear that, overnight, an astonishing 'flip-flop' had occurred for, rather than a modest building, it was now agreed that a new concept was called for. I never discovered how this dramatic intervention was achieved but one thing was very clear, the reversal had been ordered by the highest authority, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies. Obviously Sir Harold's long years of patient pleading for the needs of the National Library of Australia had had a dramatic success.¹

Peter Biskup
Faculty of Communication
University of Canberra

Endnote

- 1 Dan Sprod, 'How Harold Got His Building, and several Other Things', *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, vol. 24, no. 3, Sept. 1993, p. 201.

Reports

Department of Social Security and the Data-Matching Agency, *Data-Matching Program Report on Progress, October 1993*. AGPS, Canberra, 1993. 143 pp. ISBN 0 644 32542 9. Gratis (available from the Department of Social Security, Canberra).

In accordance with section 12(2A) of the *Data-Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990*, the Department of Social Security and the Data-Matching

Agency released this progress report in October of 1993. The report details the activities undertaken since the progress report issued in October 1992 and, ideally, should be read in conjunction with the 1992 report.

The report centres on the activities associated with the data-matching process itself but, not unexpectedly, a variety of issues pertinent to the archival community emerge from the functions performed by the agencies involved and the enabling legislative framework permitting and controlling those functions. The report illustrates the necessary accountability mechanisms in operation and links these with the associated recordkeeping environment, not always direct, but certainly inherently. The evidentiary properties of the record are amply demonstrated in this type of environment. The legislated destruction of data and the issue of connectivity in the electronic environment are demonstrated in the maintenance of privacy standards within the individual agencies and throughout the program as a whole. The involvement of the Australian National Audit Office and the Privacy Commissioner continues to provide a nexus between functional imperatives and the necessity for the maximisation of privacy standards as they relate to the individual.

So, while not specifically directed at archival/records management issues, the report focuses on an environment where the management of recorded information assumes crucial eminence and in this context is positively recommended.

Bill Orr
Australian Archives, Canberra

Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, *Performance Examinations, Report No. 2, May 1994: Records Management* (available from the Office of the Auditor General, 4th floor Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth, WA, 6005).

Independent Commission Against Corruption, *Investigations into the Relationship Between Police and Criminals, First Report, February 1994 and Second Report, April 1994*. ISBN 0 7310 2910 0 and ISBN 0 7310 2952 6 respectively (available from Commission Secretary, ICAC, GPO Box 500, Sydney, NSW, 2001).

These reports follow on a spate of recent publications by watchdog agencies, which have placed public records management issues on the accountability agenda. Earlier reports, e.g. by the Electoral and Administrative Reform

Commission in Queensland, and the WA Royal Commission on the commercial activities of the former Labor government ('WA Inc. '), have explored what regulatory frameworks are needed at macro-level to support proper recordkeeping at the micro-level within public institutions. Others, most notably reports by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption, have dealt with issues of micro-level reforms in recordkeeping practice.

The WA Auditor General recently conducted a performance examination of records management at both the macro- and micro-level in the public sector. The examination was conducted in light of at least seven public sector reviews in the past seven years in WA that have linked poor accountability to deficiencies in records management, most notably the WA Inc Royal Commission and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The resulting *Report* recommends that a 'comprehensive records management framework' be developed in WA, primarily through legislative reform 'to ensure that accountability obligations are clearly defined, assigned and discharged to the public and that records are managed in the most effective and efficient manner'. It further recommends that *within* public sector agencies responsibility for records management programs be clearly defined and assigned.

The performance examination also explored the links between the agency currently responsible for providing assistance and advice to public sector agencies on records management, the Library and Information Service of WA (LISWA), and other accountability players. The *Report* is silent on the controversial issue of which particular agency should be responsible for regulating public records management in the State, but it does canvas the possibility of separating regulatory responsibility for standard setting, monitoring and reporting from operational responsibility for the delivery of records management consultancy, training and other services to public sector agencies. This approach is picked up in the Minister for the Arts Discussion Paper on *New Public Records Legislation for Western Australia* issued in July 1994. The recordkeeping regime proposed in the Discussion Paper includes an independent Public Records Commission which would report directly to Parliament on its standards setting and monitoring responsibilities. Under the proposed regime operational responsibility for records management, i.e. for the delivery of services to assist public sector agencies to improve their recordkeeping practices would be vested in a Public Records Office positioned administratively within LISWA.

The ICAC *Reports* are concerned more with micro-level reforms in a number of areas of the NSW Police Service. In the detailed reporting of the investigation (*First Report*) and in the findings (*Second Report*) much space is devoted to an exploration of what is termed the Service's 'dismal capacity' to keep and retrieve records of its operational activities. Records of armed robberies and major criminal investigations, and the receipt, use and storage of telephone intercept material were found to be missing or incomplete, at times because of deliberate 'cover-up' action, at others because of the entrenched practice of present and former police officers retaining police briefs of evidence and other documents in their personal possession. In colourful language, which some may think more appropriate to a blockbuster crime novel than a government report, the *First Report* explores various cases of corrupt activities, under sub-headings such as 'whacking it up three ways', 'everyone wanted to give you money, mate', 'the missing witnesses', and 'the Bellamy bag snatch'.

In almost every instance there is a recordkeeping dimension to the story. Indeed, the *Reports* directly link the failure to keep proper records to corruption. In summing up the investigation, the *First Report* states:

The picture that emerged is a troubling one. That is not said just because some police became criminals. Given the nature and problems of modern policing, that is always a danger. Greater concern arises because the structures and policies were not in place to *minimise the risk*. (*First Report*, p. 267 - my emphasis.)

It goes on to single out four policy issues requiring priority attention in order to 'minimise the risk'. One of those areas is how to improve recordkeeping within the NSW Police Service, a theme taken up in the *Second Report*:

If the Police Service is serious about getting its house in order, and ridding itself of the corrupt officers who are still left after the purge of the late 1980s, then it must enforce standards of accountability, and it must keep its records faithfully. (*Second Report*, p. 39.)

This suggests that ICAC sees a causal connection between poor recordkeeping and corruption in so far as failure to 'keep . . . records faithfully' may be a precondition for corrupt activity. Specific recommendations relating to recordkeeping concern the development of records management policy and practice from 'first principles', as well as stipulation of and compliance with best practice standards. A task force with joint membership by the Police Service, ICAC and the NSW Archival Authority has been set up to implement the recommendations relating to recordkeeping.

Both reports are interesting in relation to their views on the relationship between macro- and micro-level reform in recordkeeping practice. In this regard, they highlight yet again the need for the profession to push ahead in the development of standards for records management best practice.

Sue McKemmish
Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records
Monash University

Archival Guides

Public Record Office Of Victoria And Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office, *My Heart Is Breaking: A Joint Guide to Records about Aboriginal People in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office.* Canberra. Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993. 191 pp. ISBN 0 644 32498 8. \$11.95 (available from Commonwealth Government Bookshops throughout Australia and Information Victoria, 318 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne).

A central question with any archival guide is whether it fulfils its objective of disseminating help and information to its target audience—in this case, the Aboriginal and wider community. I was particularly interested to see how the needs and cultural background of the population under discussion were considered in developing the finding aid.

What I discovered was a serious attempt to cater to the needs of Aboriginal researchers. The guide's attempt to be culturally sensitive to members of the Aboriginal community who wish to regain their past through research begins with its title, *My Heart is Breaking*. This phrase is taken from a letter written by an Aboriginal woman in 1884 who begs the authorities to return her two children to her. This awareness is continued in the special introduction, which reads like a seal of approval, and was written by Jim Berg who is the Chairperson of the Koorie Heritage Trust, Inc. The guide is at its most user friendly for this part of its target audience in regard to genealogical research. A subsection entitled *Tracing Your Aboriginal Past*, created from the Aboriginal Case Files held at Australian Archives, is a prominent feature of the guide. All names, along with the relevant date ranges, are conveniently listed in alphabetical order. Other sections are not so user friendly.

This 1993 joint publication of Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office, and the Public Record Office of Victoria, states that it is was designed for use in all 'general, academic or genealogical research' by both the Aboriginal and

wider community. The listing of available records in the guide is divided into two separate and autonomous sections, one for the Public Record Office and the other for Australian Archives. The date range for the records covered are the years 1839 to 1975 when the Commonwealth assumed the State's responsibilities for Aboriginal Affairs. Neither section describes the method by which the guide was compiled. However, the implication of both is that it contains a comprehensive listing of all the pertinent records from the two archives.

Within the Public Record Office section, the researcher is presented with an annotated series listing. The title of each series acts as an access point by describing the creating agency, form and content for the records that it contains. The series information also includes a relevant date range and a slightly more detailed description. The series are grouped, in chronological order, by subject matter to create two more access points which ease the problems of general research within this archival arrangement system. The six subject groupings are: The Aboriginal Protectorate and Its Successors, Central Administration of the District/Colony/State, Crown Lands and the Surveyor General, Legal, Education and Finance.

The creating agencies are only listed at the beginning of the first subject grouping, the Aboriginal Protectorate and Its Successors, and even here, there is little specific information given about their role or activities. The closest thing to a brief description of the administrative history of each governmental body is a chart listing the date, Official/Minister, Office/Department and Agency that performed the direct function of administering Aboriginal Affairs over the years. By exhibiting both the record group and agency levels, the chart gives the researcher the knowledge, at least, of who all the previous creating agencies were for specific series. This chart also includes, as an access point to the records, the Victorian Agency identification numbers for the creating agencies. Yet, even in this chart, only the most basic contextual information can be gleaned, often only through the use of inference. For the remaining record series, their inclusion in a specific subject category allows a partial, but in no way adequate, picture of context to emerge. The researcher is done a great disservice by this section of the guide through the lack of attention that it pays to context.

The Australian Archives section of *My Heart is Breaking* begins with short histories of the four central administrative agencies and the four other bodies that created and/or collected the records listed. Some information about the functions and activities of each of these bodies are also included, as well as the Commonwealth Agency identification number. The series listing is separated into the two subdivisions of Central Administration and Other

Agencies. Within these subdivisions, the series are listed in chronological order based on the first year of their date range. As an access point, this allows the researcher to quickly move past any undesired time period. The title of each series listing is another access point since it briefly states the forms of records contained within. The description of each series includes the series number along with a more detailed discussion of the form and general content of the records. In this section, all creating agencies are listed. Therefore, the context of individual series can be cross-referenced back to the brief histories at the beginning of the section.

An introduction to the basic archival concepts by which the records are classified is completely absent from both sections of *My Heart is Breaking*, despite its stated target audience. This is a particular problem within the guide since it lists records under the two distinct systems employed by these two separate archival bodies. A knowledge of the similar principles behind both descriptive systems, e.g. through the provision of some basic archival definitions, would make the task of searching each section, both separately and in combination, much less daunting. Instead, knowledge and understanding of the archival classification system are assumed.

The Australian Archives portion compounds this assumption by engaging in an extensive discussion, in its introduction, of the loss of original order which has occurred within many of its series. In fact, this discussion is used as an explanation for the Australian Archives staff's decision to place records that have lost their original order into chronological order. It is difficult for this explanation to have any meaning when the user of the guide does not even understand the concepts being discussed.

The majority of the entries in the index of *My Heart is Breaking* are the names of specific individuals and tribes. The number and variety of subject or function headings are small by comparison. Yet at least in the Public Record Office section a functional approach is provided through the process of record grouping. This is reinforced by the variety of subject-type headings that are also found in the final part of this guide, 'Glimpses of the Past', which will be discussed shortly. The Australian Archives portion lacks an extensive use of subject headings and would, therefore, better serve the less knowledgeable researcher with the inclusion of more general purpose entries in the index.

'Glimpses of the Past' is the final part of *My Heart is Breaking*. It was written as an educational outreach tool and covers a wide variety of topics, ranging from Health and Welfare to Naval Seaman Thomas Bungalene who became the first and only Aboriginal to serve in the Victorian Navy. Jim Berg, author

of the special introduction to the guide, sees it not only as a means by which Aboriginal peoples can regain their past through the historical record but also as a resource for cross-cultural training. However, this section is too flawed from the outset to successfully accomplish either of these tasks.

The choice of documents to be published is, itself, a value judgement. Yet once chosen the documents should be allowed, without interference, to disseminate their information to the reader. The author of this section prevents the documents from fulfilling this role. In the background information written to place the documents in context for the reader, the author uses non-neutral words and terms which influence the eventual reading of the record. An example of this relates to the Coranderrk Aboriginal Station Journal of Christian Ogilvie who was Secretary and General Inspector of the Board for the Protection of Aboriginals between 1875 and 1877. The section's author says that Ogilvie had a slightly disapproving attitude towards Aboriginals. However, in the same introduction to the journal, he includes a quote by Ogilvie in which he states that 'I have not great affection for the blacks at Coranderrk'. Within the journal Ogilvie refers to Aboriginals and their abilities with comments like 'I explained to him, and his admiring crowd, in language that they could understand' and 'Mr Green...told some lame story about the natives settling the rights of succession to property themselves, Bah'. The overall effect of 'Glimpses of the Past' is a subjective view of history which, to this extent, is usually associated with secondary rather than primary sources.

My Heart is Breaking professes to be an aid for all types of researchers but needs to be more self-explanatory for researchers with no previous experience with these particular archival institutions and their systems. Some parts of the guide work well. It is enhanced by the inclusion of a reference guide to all Aboriginal records located in other archives around the country, and a select bibliography of publications which may be of interest or use to the researcher. Although 'Glimpses of the Past' needs some major revision before its goals can be achieved, the first part of *My Heart is Breaking* grapples quite effectively with the cultural and research needs of Aboriginals struggling to regain their past.

Catherine Thomas
Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records
Monash University

Bruce G. Wilson, editor, *Manuscripts and Government Records in the United Kingdom and Ireland relating to Canada*. National Archives of Canada. Ottawa. 1992. 705pp. ISBN 0 660 57424 1.

One of the legacies of the British Empire is the extraordinary wealth, diversity and international interest of the collections held in British archives, libraries, museums and other repositories. Not only foreign historians but also foreign archivists have for long been conspicuous in the search rooms of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and record offices throughout Britain and Ireland, searching for and copying sources in remote countries and regions. One result of their labours has been a series of published surveys of manuscript sources located in Britain. As early as 1914 Charles Paullin and Frederic Paxson compiled a listing of American source materials in London archives. More recently, guides have appeared describing British archives relating to the United States (B.R. Crick and Miriam Alman, 1961), Africa (Noel Matthews and Doreen Wheelwright, 1971), Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific (Phyllis Mander-Jones, 1972), Latin America and the West Indies (Peter Walne, 1973), Russia (Janet Hartley, 1987) and South and South-East Asia (J.D. Pearson, 1989). Now historians in the largest of the old Dominions can draw on a guide of comparable scope and quality.

Bruce Wilson, the editor of this publication, was the representative of the National Archives of Canada in London in the early 1980s. His surveys of British repositories, and those carried out by his colleague Anita Burdett, began in London and eventually extended as far as Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Orkneys and the Shetlands. In addition, they made use of the work of their predecessors who, for more than a century, had copied British records of Canadian interest. Unlike the Australian Joint Copying Project microfilm, the Canadian copies have never been kept together within the National Archives and up to now there has been no consolidated guide to the thousands of pages of transcripts and photocopies and the 7 000 reels of microfilm of British records.

The volume is somewhat forbidding in appearance: heavy and bulky, with a fairly small type, two columns per page, 573 pages of descriptions and an index of 120 pages. On the other hand, the layout is less cramped and the headings more distinctive than those of the Australian guide compiled by Mander-Jones. The format of the Canadian guide is basically similar to that of Mander-Jones and its other predecessors. The arrangement is geographical, beginning with Avon and ending with County Wexford. There is thus a single entry for each repository or owner. As well as descriptions, the entries contain references to published finding aids and also unpublished lists in the National

Register of Archives in London. Three useful appendices list a large number of bodies that apparently have no Canadian holdings or which in recent times have transferred their archives to other repositories. The index is extremely detailed and includes names, titles of newspapers and other publications, geographical terms and subjects.

The title of the volume is a trifle misleading, as relatively little space has been given to government records. The entry for the largest archives in Britain, the Public Record Office, is surprisingly brief, with descriptions confined to a few personal and other collections acquired as gifts or deposits. Unlike Mander-Jones, who devoted 130 pages to the PRO, Dr Wilson did not consider it feasible to describe adequately Canadian material scattered among hundreds of PRO classes. There are entries for a few other government archives, such as the Post Office and the Hydrographic Department, but local government records are usually passed over, even though they often contain papers on emigration to the colonies. In short, the emphasis is very much on manuscripts and private archives.

The Canadian guide excels in highlighting the diversity of archives in Britain. It contains descriptions of material held in 872 repositories, far more than any of its predecessors (Mander-Jones had 286 entries). Some entries refer to archives which did not exist when Mander-Jones did her survey, but overall Dr Wilson has achieved a better coverage of holdings of local record offices, university colleges and military museums, as well as of papers that are still in private hands. There are substantial entries for several bodies overlooked by Australian surveys, such as the Grand Lodge Library, the Labour Party, the National Portrait Gallery and the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University. Among the small and often obscure archives represented are the Brewers Society, the Polish Library, the Moravian Church Archives, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, the Institute of Agricultural History and the Leprosy Museum. Occasional gaps can be found. It is surprising, for instance, that no Canadian material was unearthed in the papers of the Duke of Wellington at Southampton University or in the archives of the Royal Astronomical Society. Nevertheless, the only major weakness would appear to be business records.

The unprecedented breadth of coverage is achieved at a cost. Dr Wilson acknowledges that there is 'an inequality of emphasis', which is rather an understatement. Uneven descriptions are endemic in publications of this kind, which are based mainly on existing finding aids rather than an inspection of the actual records. With an average entry length of less than a page, the descriptions for the larger and more important collections were bound to be succinct in the extreme. A few repositories have extensive entries, notably

the National Register of Archives (Scotland), the British Library, the Scott Polar Research Institute and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. In other entries a great deal of space is consumed listing single items of slight research value, such as a mortgage or a photograph of a stuffed buffalo head. As a result, outstanding collections suffer from summary treatment. The Gladstone Papers, which were given fifteen pages by Mander-Jones, are disposed of in half a column by Dr Wilson. Many entries simply list a few examples of relevant records and the volume thus veers towards being a directory, suggesting possible locations to a researcher, rather than a comprehensive catalogue.

References to Australia are rare and even the Canadian political exiles of 1839 have only one index entry. The volume will, however, be a valuable aid for students of Imperial and Commonwealth history. It should also be of interest to archivists outside Canada in exemplifying both the possibilities and the difficulties of presenting descriptions of a great variety of archival records within the confines of a traditional publication. If a new edition of Mander-Jones were ever attempted, Dr Wilson's work will be both a fine model and an indispensable source of data.

Graeme Powell
Manuscript Librarian
National Library of Australia

Australian Science Archives Project, *A Guide to the Records of Lawrence Percival Coombes*. Prepared by Mandy Johnson, Mark Scillio, Angela Taylor and Rod Buchanan with Lisa O'Sullivan and Gavan McCarthy. ASAP 1993. *A Guide to the Records of Frank Macfarlane Burnet*. Prepared by Gavan McCarthy, Oscar Manhal and Lisa O'Sullivan with Tim Sherratt. ASAP, 1993. *A Guide to the Records of Philip Crosbie Morrison*. Prepared by Stuart Brash, Anne-Marie Conde and Libby Robin with Gavan McCarthy and Tim Sherratt. ASAP, 1993. *A Guide to the Records of Albert Lloyd Rees*. Prepared by Rod Buchanan, Gavan McCarthy and Mark Scillio with Lisa O'Sullivan. ASAP, 1993. ISSN 1039-1096. \$20 each plus \$5 postage (available from Australian Science Archives Project, GPO Box 783, Canberra, ACT 2601).

The Australian Science Archives Project has produced a growing number of guides to the records of individuals in the science field since the publication of the *Guide to the Archives of Science in Australia—Records of Individuals*. The guides have provided researchers with a detailed finding aid to the papers of individuals which might otherwise have remained largely undescribed. They

reflect the ongoing contribution that the Australian Science Archives Project teams have made to locating, sorting, listing and indexing the archival records of Australian scientists.

The most recent guides produced by ASAP are to the records of Frank Macfarlane Burnet (deposited with the University of Melbourne Archives), of Albert Lloyd George Rees (deposited with the Basser Library, Australian Academy of Science), and of Lawrence Percival Coombes and Philip Crosbie Morrison (both deposited with the La Trobe Library). All were distinguished scientists in their fields. F. M. Burnet (1899-1985) was a medical scientist and biologist, a noble prize winner and was Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. A. L. G. Rees (1916-1989) was a Chemist and Head of the Chemical Physics Section, CSIRO and later Chief of the Division of Chemical Physics for twenty years. L. P. Coombes (1899-1988) was an aeronautical scientist and the first Director of the Aeronautical Research Laboratory. P. C. Morrison (1900-1958) was a naturalist and broadcaster and the editor of *Wildlife* during the late 1930s to the mid 1950s. He also broadcast regular nature talks from 1938 until his death.

The guides consist of a contents list, an introduction which contains information about the size and date range of the collections, a provenance note and a very brief biographical note. The contents list contains a series listing with a brief series description. The guides also include instructions on their use, a list of abbreviations, a detailed item listing according to series and an index and box list. The career summary which lists major achievements and important events in chronological order is useful, although a more detailed biographical note which is not just part of the introduction would be a welcome addition to the Guides. The Guides to Philip Crosbie Morrison, Albert Lloyd George Rees and Frank Macfarlane Burnet also include a useful list of records, not located as part of the ASAP project and held in a different archival institution to that of the deposit organised by ASAP.

As always, the records which ASAP has described are deposited with a suitable collecting institution although no reference is made to the control number within the institution. ASAP seems to have developed its own descriptive standards and format without taking into account those used by the collecting institution. This could possibly cause problems for the collecting institution and the researchers.

The amount of description at the item level which ASAP is able to provide researchers is commendable. However, the level of description provided highlights a number of items where the archival value is questionable. For example, in the guide to the records of L. P. Coombes, item 1/43 is described

as 'Hearing Aid Devices', 'Various pamphlets for Nancy Coombes, n.d.' There is no indication given that the pamphlets have been annotated which might provide some justification for them being retained. Likewise in item 2/1 titled 'Car Papers' there is included in the list of contents 'Receipts for car repairs and service'. The value of listing such items, let alone retaining them as part of the collection needs to be questioned and one wonders whether the collecting institution is consulted by ASAP at the appraisal stage.

Another example where the descriptive standards may differ from those of the collecting institution is that the series titles are inconsistent and not always what other archival institutions would consider to be series. For example in the guide to the papers of Percival Lawrence Coombes series 1 is titled 'Personal Biographical' and series 2 is titled 'Financial Records'. Likewise, item titles such as 'miscellaneous memorabilia' and 'miscellaneous personal' or 'oddments' have limited value as part of a finding aid as they give little or no indication of what is contained.

The change in style since the publication of earlier guides produced by ASAP is a definite improvement. For instance the file size (recorded in millimetres) is no longer recorded in the left hand column of the item listing where it could easily be confused by the researcher as an item control number.

All of the inclusions in the guides come together to provide the researcher with a valuable finding aid which is well presented and easy to use. The detailed item listing provides the researcher with an excellent reference tool which enables them to locate the exact document required. I am sure that researchers interested in the history and philosophy of science and the papers of Australian scientists look forward to the publication of future guides produced by ASAP.

Cathy Hobbs-Faulkner
CSIRO Archives

Conferences and Seminars

Exchange of ASEAN Archivists: Archival Profession — Development and Problems. Jakarta, 24–30 January 1994.

The *Exchange of ASEAN Archivists* is a five-year program under the aegis of the ASEAN-COCI (an organisation which deals with cultural affairs). Beginning in 1993, the program aims to bring archivists or those concerned with managing records from the ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) together for

dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences. Each ASEAN country takes turns to be the host. The first meeting was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1993. The second meeting was hosted by Indonesia and was held at Jakarta and Bandung from 24 to 30 January 1994.

The second meeting of *Exchange of ASEAN Archivists* was focused on the Archival Profession. The participants consisted of twelve delegates from the six ASEAN countries and a number of archivists/records managers from both public and private sectors of the host country. The meeting included study visits to various archives and records centres both in Jakarta and Bandung, e.g. the National Archives of Indonesia, the Records Centre of the Home Affairs Department, the Telekomunikasi (Indonesian Telecommunications Authority) and the Records Centre of the District of Sukasari, Bandung.

On the third day, after two days of adventure visiting sites in both Jakarta and Bandung, presentations and discussion focused on the archival profession. Apart from presentations on each ASEAN country, Dr Nurhadi Magetsari, the Director of the National Archives of Indonesia, provided a keynote address; Mr Djoko Utomo, Deputy Director of the National Archives of Indonesia, spoke about the archival profession in general; and Mr Daron Kw Liew, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the Transnational Company of Singapore, introduced the fundamentals of a records centre operation.

In ASEAN countries the establishment of the National Archives marked the creation of the archival profession. Although the term 'archives' is being defined differently among the ASEAN countries, archivists from each ASEAN country found that they could talk to, learn from and understand each other.

It emerged from the discussion that in fact, the roles and functions of the person known as 'archivist' differ only slightly from one country to another. In Brunei Darussalam, the archival profession is in its infancy. The National Archives was established as a section of the Museum Department in 1972. In the early years after its establishment, training of the archives staff was given priority. As a result, a small number of staff were sent aboard for archival training. Today, the number of qualified personnel is still small especially as the National Archives is being expanded. The new archives building is under construction and it is expected that the National Archives will become an independent institution soon. In the future it is expected that the archival profession will be developed and recognised.

In Indonesia, *arsiparis* are those who are involved either with the records management program of an organisation or with the archival work in an archival institution. Thus, *arsiparis* are generally found everywhere in

government offices with different levels and status. *Arsiparis* must have appropriate records/archives management training which is conducted by their own agencies in cooperation with the National Archives.

In Malaysia, the archival profession exists only in the National Archives, in the State Archives and in the Archives Units of departments, in other words only in government agencies. Archivists do not only deal with archival work but are also involved in records management. Nearly all Malaysian archivists graduated with archival studies degrees from overseas institutions. In the Philippines, the National Archives is known as The Records Management and Archives Office. Today, the number of archivists is growing and the construction of a National Archives' building is underway. Recently, the Records Management and Archives Office developed specialised or advanced training programs, set to commence in March 1994.

In Singapore, the National Archives was first established in 1968 and in 1993 the National Archives, the National Museum and the Oral History Department came under a single statutory board—the National Heritage Board. The professional staff of the National Archives are known as 'archives officers'. The archives officers are involved with all kinds of archival and records management work, have normally been trained on-the-job in various subjects, for instance local history and archives, records management principles and practices, and courses on computers.

In Thailand, the archives function has existed for a long time. However, the National Archives was officially established in 1952. Those persons who worked in the National Archives were known as 'librarian'. The title of *Nahk Jod-Mai-Het* or archivist was recognised when the Civil Service Commission accepted the title of *Nahk Jod-Mai-Het* in the Classification of Civil Services System in 1975. Today, only three agencies — the National Archives, the Royal Secretary's Office and the National Bank employ archivists to work for their archival institutions. Most archivists have been trained on-the-job. Some of them may have had an opportunity to attend workshops or short courses abroad.

The meeting, both the study visits and discussions, were adventurous, enjoyable and thought provoking. In addition, the hospitality from the meeting's organising staff was excellent. The following conclusions and recommendations came out of the *Exchange*:

1. The archival profession of the ASEAN countries should encompass both archival and records management work.

2. Archivists should upgrade their roles and image in order to exert greater influence on society.
3. Archivists need to upgrade their skills particularly in the new technologies area in order to work more efficiently.
4. It is essential to look into the management of electronic records which will become increasingly popular in government agencies.
5. Archives should recruit people from various disciplines in order to handle records of different nature and formats.
6. The time is right for ASEAN archivists to form a regional professional association in order to share experiences and expertise and to gain recognition from the public.
7. The two non-ASEAN countries, Myanmar and Vietnam, should be invited to participate in future *Exchange of ASEAN Archivists* meetings.
8. The next *Exchange of ASEAN Archivists* meeting should be postponed until 1995 due to the insufficient time available to submit a budget proposal to the respective government. The Philippines will host the first meeting in 1995, followed by Thailand. In 1996, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam will host the meetings.

Somsuang Prudtikul

PhD student

Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records

Monash University

Archives in the Tropics. Australian Society of Archivists, Inc. Annual Conference. Townsville, 9-11 May 1994.

The first ever Australian Society of Archivists conference in northern Australia was held in Townsville from 9 to 11 May 1994. The 150 participants included not only archivists from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and the US but also students from Charters Towers State High School and representatives from the principal Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs.

The Conference was titled 'Archives in the Tropics' and it was therefore appropriate that the invited overseas guest was Mrs Zakiah Hanum Nor, Director-General of the National Archives of Malaysia. In her keynote address,



ASA conference, Townsville: L to R: Paul Brunton, ASA President; Mrs Hanum Nor, Director-General, National Archives of Malaysia; June Edwards, James Cook University Archivist and organiser of the 1994 conference. Photo: Baiba Berzins.

Mrs Hanum Nor gave a comprehensive overview of the archival situation in South-East Asia. She dealt particularly with the role of SARBICA, the first regional branch of the International Council on Archives, which has been active in organising regional meetings on archives and records management topics and in arranging exchange and training programs to upgrade the skills of the staff of member archives. In her second address, she traced the development of the National Archives of Malaysia which began with a staff of three in 1957 and now employs 436 people in an extensive records management and archives operation. In recent years the National Archives has devoted much attention to its outreach programs, carried out in fulfilment of its objective of creating 'a nation of informed citizens imbued with the love of their country'. The programs include encouragement of the use of the Archives by schoolchildren, exhibitions, the maintenance of memorials to national figures and events, 'history narrating sessions', publications and radio and television programs. This active identification with the nation's cultural heritage has gained the National Archives greater understanding, improved funding and over eleven million visitors.

Education and Training was the theme of the first Conference session. Peter Orlovich spoke about the situation in the Pacific where only a small percentage of archival custodians are exposed to the type of training which enables the maintenance of archives in accordance with international standards and

principles. In Central Australia, as Fabian Hutchinson described, information management and archival training is being planned for identified staff of Aboriginal organisations in order to give them the knowledge, skills and competency to manage the records and to document the history of their own organisations. The development, content and future directions of archives and records education at Monash University was the theme of Livia Iacovino's talk while Karen Anderson explained how the new Archives Studies course at Edith Cowan University is to be delivered to external students through the facilities of 'The Virtual Campus'.

Vicki Warden began the Conservation session with an illustrated introduction to the magnificent new Queensland State Archives building at Runcorn. Guy Petherbridge followed with a guided tour to archives in countries such as Trinidad, Brazil and Ecuador where he has carried out archives conservation work. His talk emphasised the diversity of climate, history and culture encompassed in the countries of the tropics and provided a salutary reminder about assessing each situation separately and developing strategies which take account of local practice in the past as well as the high-tech solutions of developed countries.

The first day concluded with a session on Oral History. Mark Cranfield outlined the development of the Oral History Collection at the National Library of Australia from 1960 to 1993 while Francis Good spoke about the recording and documentation of oral history at the Northern Territory Archives Services. The cultural and historical considerations that have to be taken into account in collecting indigenous oral history and oral tradition were described by Monty Soutar with reference to his own experiences with Maori communities. The session concluded far away from the tropics with a report by Tim Bowden on his oral world in documenting the history of the Australian Antarctic Division.

Electronic recordkeeping, the subject of the May 1994 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* (guest edited by Glenda Acland), was the opening session of the second day. Three of the contributors to the special issue, Clive Smith of the World Bank, Anne Picot of the Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW and Adrian Cunningham of the National Library spoke to their papers while David Bearman of Archives and Museum Informatics provided a commentary. Though giving Australians praise for their contributions to the international debate on electronic recordkeeping, Bearman warned that the mess we're in is as big as the mess everyone else is in. He warned again of the need to concentrate on managing records, not documents or information, and cautioned against assuming responsibility for the implementation of

functional requirements which were rightly the responsibility of the record creating body.

Problems associated with the records of indigenous experience were canvassed in the session on Documenting Aboriginal/Islander Experience. Ewan Maidment described his recent survey of trade union records in the Pacific. Apart from their organisational value the records are important for documenting such matters as genealogies and traditional land ownership. Even when there are good holdings however, as in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, the storage conditions and the physical state of the records are often poor. A similar picture emerged from Karin Brennan's account of her 1991 survey of the records of the German colonial administration in Western Samoa from 1890 to 1914. Some of the records have been relocated to New Zealand while those retained in Western Samoa are often stored in poor conditions or are still in current use, with consequent damage through regular handling.

The ownership and control of information collected from Aboriginals was the theme of Henrietta Fourmile's talk. She concentrated in particular on the genealogies, now held at the South Australian Museum, gathered by Norman Tindale in the late 1930s to investigate the effects of racial interbreeding in Australia. She referred to cases where this highly personal and sensitive information had been used against the interests of Aboriginal people and warned against its possible future use in land claims arising under the Mabo judgement. In their talks, Kathy Frankland and Ysola Best gave an overview of measures to improve access to Aboriginal records, especially family history information, in Queensland. At the State Library of Queensland they have developed a database of information available to Aboriginal people and communities which they hope will be on-line in the near future. They have also engaged in a program of workshops to assist Aboriginal people in compiling their genealogies. At present Kathy is involved in a major project for the Queensland State Archives and the Department of Aboriginal Services to produce three guides to government records relating to Aboriginal people.

In the last session Helen Lucas gave an account of the Roman Catholic Church Archives in Townsville which contain records of both national and Queensland interest but which are hampered by the problems facing so many small archives: no money, no resources, no qualified staff. Professor Barrie Reynolds of the Material Culture Unit at James Cook University argued for closer communication between archives and museums at both the institutional and individual level while Baiba Berzins looked at the actual and potential use of the Taxation Incentives for the Arts scheme by archival institutions.

The Conference was stimulating and thought-provoking, especially in dealing with topics such as indigenous records which the Society, unlike other related professional associations, has not really addressed. Those who were not able to attend are urged to read the papers when they are published later this year. Several Special Interest Groups held meetings after the Conference. A report on the Collecting Archives SIG meeting on 'Friends or Enemies?: Collecting Archives and the Management of Archival Materials Australians' will appear in *Limited Addition*, on the SIG on Archives Technology meeting in the *History of Australian Science Newsletter*, and on the University and College Archives SIG meeting, which dealt with the impact of CASMAC on university recordkeeping, in the *ASA Bulletin*.

June Edwards, the Archivist at James Cook University, deserves both credit and admiration for organising an interesting and enjoyable Conference. I am sure that as a result I am not the only one who would like to see more ASA conferences held in the balmy warmth of the dry in Northern Australia.

Baiba Berzins
Freelance Historian

Secrets & Sources—Records Uses & Abuses in the 1990s. 11th National Convention. Records Management Association of Australia. Adelaide, South Australia, 11-14 September 1994.

Not every session at the RMAA's 11th National Convention has been reviewed, but that is not to say that those other papers and presentations did not contribute to the theme and overall outcomes of the Convention. Readers are encouraged to seek out the published papers.

The theme of this Convention, *Secrets & Sources—Records Uses & Abuses in the 1990s*, created an expectation of discussion about the issues of privacy, integrity and confidentiality of records and the commitment of the records management profession to bolster these aspects of their responsibilities.

The Hon. Stephen Baker, MP, Deputy Premier and Treasurer of South Australia, commendably, laid the foundation for this theme in his official opening address, referring to accessibility and security of information. He pinpointed the requirement that the maximum amount of information be made available to the public whilst protecting against the risk of disclosure of matters of personal privacy, and business in confidence information. Mr Baker stressed the need for a balance to be found between 'good

housekeepers—deciding what to get and keep; gatekeepers—deciding who can and cannot get access; and good guides—to finding the information’.

The keynote address by former Leader of the Democrats, Janine Haines, was a well-researched paper about *Invasions of privacy in an age of high technology*. Her sensitivity to the careless release of personal information was all too graphically illustrated in the examples she gave of personal harm that such action can bring. Her final comments were that ‘the privacy of the individuals about whom information is stored, lies primarily and properly with those who collect, collate and store that data. And the credibility and integrity of your profession, . . . depends on how well you do it’.¹ These remarks should have captured the attention of all those 400 and more delegates attending this Convention.

The following presentation, by Mark Douglas, an organisational and industrial psychologist, brought the focus of attention again to a theme much discussed these past several conventions: ‘What do you need to do to guarantee your future in a changing corporate environment?’ Douglas suggested that a shared ambition, a vision, could be determined in order to invent our future — ‘The best way to predict the future is to invent it’. Douglas referred to the need for ‘dissatisfaction’ or ‘discomfort’ in the profession to generate the energy to change. His alternative, to stay the same, suggested to this reviewer that even though the profession has been given this message before, we must still need to hear it.

Although the theme of the Convention made no reference to the education, training and competencies of records management personnel, constructive papers focused on these issues. The first of these was given by Vicky Wilson who proposed that there should be para-professionals and professionals in records and archives management. This fits comfortably with the intended national curriculum at Technical and Further Education level and revised offerings at university level.

It is always tricky to attempt to role play, especially post-luncheon and in front of a large audience. The session advertised as a panel forum but conducted as a meeting of shareholders to review the roles of the information professionals in today’s office at least provided the opportunity for the four information industry voices to be heard: the archivist, the records manager, the librarian and the information technologist. But, . . .

An exceptionally important and polished presentation about accountability in the Commonwealth bureaucracy was given by Peter Kennedy, Deputy Commissioner, Commonwealth Public Service Commission. His

comprehensive paper should be required reading for all information managers.

Day Two of the Convention began with the Annual General Meeting of the Association—not well attended considering the number of registered delegates, and perhaps this is a demonstration of the commitment of members to the administration of their professional organisation. The AGM was followed by the best opportunity to visit the trade exhibition, but not long enough to investigate other than targeted stands.

Graham Pratt's paper *Emerging Technology—Evidentiary Issues—the South Australian Approach* (presented by Russ James) outlined the tests which must be satisfied to meet the requirements of the Evidence Act. It also identified two key questions: Will the output from an imaging system be accepted as evidence?, and, Can the paper record be destroyed?

The notion of continuing the discussions about education issues raised at the RMAA's 10th National Convention in Hobart, Tasmania in 1993, provided an important opportunity to update those discussions. This year's delegates who attended the Education Workshop heard Michael Piggott's thought-provoking paper 'Competent, educated and trained—to do what and how well?' He referred to the National Training Board Reform Agenda and its premise that it is the industry not the associations or the educational authorities which decides who is competent. He referred also to the education programs currently available in Australia and the more recent approach to integrated studies in records management and archives, claiming that they are 'about the same thing'. Finally, he proposed that the RMAA and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) might undertake joint accreditation of courses. A short presentation was given in the same Workshop by Peter Acres from State Records, SA and the principal consultant for the 'whole of government' records management program in South Australia, first mentioned by The Hon. Mr Baker in his opening address. This program is designed to ensure a level of standards in recordkeeping across government agencies. A major component to the success of this approach to 'whole of government' records management was perceived to be the provision of training and education. The prospect of a career path, including appointments at senior levels, was seen as an important consequence of this commitment to training and education. It is hoped that the outcomes from the Education Workshops will be collated and published separately.

Presentations on Day Three centred mainly around archival issues. Wendy Southern's informative paper provided good insights into the recordkeeping practices of a Royal Commission. The role of the department in releasing

records from Royal Commissions and issues relating to the holding of records that are generated and/or called for as part of a Royal Commission were highlighted. The South Australian Police Department's Brian Smith outlined the history of the laws relating to fraud and provided vivid examples of the types of fraud that occur. He especially referred to the problems which arise from the use of computers and the admissibility of computer generated records as evidence. Tony Burke's paper, *The Role of Records Managers in Vital Records Protection for the 1990s*, especially the section dealing with risk management, is well worth reading in the published proceedings.

The closing speaker, Andrew Matthews, captured the attention of the delegates with his clever cartoonery coupled with his down-to-earth advice about 'Being Happy'.² and being effective.

This Association's conventions have become renowned for their trade exhibitions. The organisers of this Convention provided the opportunity for trade representatives to give a five-minute presentation about their products. (A few time overruns occurred!) This innovative step was no doubt appreciated by the exhibitors and the delegates since time to visit the stands was limited to refreshment breaks and two hours following the Association's annual general meeting.

There are some gaps in the published papers—never easy to avoid, but in this case significant contributions are missing. This is unfortunate as scholars, researchers and those unable to attend the Convention sessions will miss the content of worthwhile papers. Persuading conference presenters to make available their papers for publication—by the deadline! — is not easy.

As with all conventions, variations in presentation style have an impact on the interpretation by delegates of the presenters' views. In several instances at this Convention, the published papers make up for less than effective presentations. The workshops and concurrent sessions forced choices but appear overall to have been informative. Those attended by this reviewer provided valuable material.

The concept of the three views of the world of records management presented during the Convention Dinner would have worked better had we been able to rekindle our hearing to listen to them. Conversation with those alongside us was well nigh impossible. This was disappointing as delegates had been encouraged by the Convention organisers to widen our circle of contacts by sharing dinner with a new group of people.

The pervasive issue of the increasingly blurred boundary between records management and archives management was an underlying current during this Convention. Perhaps this focus should engender the possibility of holding a joint convention (or conference) of the RMAA and the ASA. This would provide a realistic opportunity to examine very closely issues about image, professionalism, and the future of the information industry. It could bring about a unified and powerful group whose commitment is clearly to provide their related services in the best possible manner.

Elaine Eccleston
Lecturer, Information and Records Management
Faculty of Communication
University of Canberra, ACT

Endnotes

- 1 Janine Haines, 'Invasions of Privacy in an Age of High Technology', *Proceedings of the 11th National Convention, Records Management Association of Australia*, RMAA, Adelaide, 11 September, p. 12.
- 2 Andrew Matthews, *Being Happy: A Handbook to Greater Confidence and Security*, Media Masters, Singapore, 1988.

Total Recall. A Conference on Managing the Information Environment for Corporate Accountability. Edith Cowan University, RMAA Western Australia, Curtin University. Claremont, 3-4 May 1994.

Hosted by the WA Branch of the RMAA and supported by both Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities, six speakers and about sixty participants gathered to talk about accountability and records management at the Claremont Convention Centre at Edith Cowan University on 3-4 May 1994. While the lion's share of the conference was devoted to two North American guest speakers I orient the bulk of this review to the Australian content. This is due to a basic parochialism on my part and restrictions on space rather than being a comment on the content of their papers or the discussion and outcome of the workshops that they facilitated.

In addressing his role as the WA Auditor-General Des Pearson quoted from the 1992 Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters in support of quality records management. His office rarely resorts to speculation about the unknown or reliance upon '*expert opinion*' (my emphasis). Its interest is in records and information where their quality can be established with reasonable confidence. A recently completed review noted 'a lack of clarity of accountability for public sector records management through all levels of government'. To be tabled in early May, it recommends

that a comprehensive records management framework be developed to ensure the effective and efficient management of public sector records.

Lance McMahon, one-time Principal Policy Adviser to the WA Premier, based his address on the fact that history is an assessment of surviving documentation. Quoting Samuel Butler's wry observation, 'Though God cannot alter the past, historians can', he noted that 'Accountability, like history, is an inexact science built on the quality of the records available', and asserted that accountability is an essential element in our liberal democratic form of government. Because of their critical role, he said, 'records managers should receive specific training and understanding of the issues and practices involved in implementing effective accountability'. He ended up suggesting 'we must take our records systems and those who operate them seriously'.

David Stephens addressed seven records management and accountability problems in relation to the management of electronic records. Probably the most significant of these is the fact that the ownership status and management responsibility for electronic records are often not clearly defined.

Monique Attinger, in a presentation titled 'Just the Fax (?): Information Architecture and Corporate Accountability', addressed accountability problems where information is in a wide variety of media and locations. She noted the existence of 'islands of information' with no thought to the records life cycle or corporate-wide information needs. Monique reinforced the requirement for a Corporate Information Architecture and its concomitant audit trail for transactional activity. She noted that a significant element of risk management is fundamental to effective records management.

Sue McKemmish hit the nail on the head, again! In a paper aptly titled 'Like Flies to a Carcase: Corruption, Accountability and Record keeping', Sue brought the findings of many recent Royal Commissions and enquiries to bear, noting that 'They have drawn links between accountability and recordkeeping in ways which suggest a strong social mission for record keeping professionals'. In analysing the current role of information work she highlighted the anomaly of stressing access and use while down playing the complementary roles of ensuring integrity, completeness, accuracy and reliability. She noted: 'The recordkeeping dimension is primarily concerned with capturing complete, accurate, reliable and usable records of transactions, and managing them in accordance with appropriate standards in order to provide evidence of social and organisational activity'. She too pondered the WA suggestion (also made in the Queensland review of archival legislation) for a recordkeeping audit agency, but could not see the resources being made

available for a full scale model. Instead she suggested a role based on developing recordkeeping audit methods, providing advice and consultancy in relation to internal recordkeeping audit processes, and engaging in research and development such as assessing the impact of changing technology and communications patterns on record systems integrity. In exploring current work on a macro-quality standards framework, she drew attention to the work of the Standards Australia IT/21 Records Management Committee. She concluded that records managers have been finding '... a sense of social mission and a language of purpose for their profession in the nexus between record keeping and accountability'.

Frank McKenna presented a technically oriented paper to address some well recognised information access problems. His main message was that there can be no accountability without documentation and access to it. To achieve this objective we need to work towards a unified system that is document centric not applications oriented.

Monique and David lead separate and concurrent workshop sessions to further discuss and clarify their views on electronic records and accountability. Ms Attinger lead a discussion around the use of an information architecture to facilitate control and retrieval. She suggested that workflow control was inadequate to provide integration of information formats. A major portion of the workshop dealt with creating and implementing an information architecture as a mechanism to enhance quality records for accountability purposes.

The conference found good grounds for confidence in the information profession's future. There was wide ranging acknowledgment that society places great value on records and information, not only as tools of good management and the basis of accountability, but also because of their social functionality. Drawing on both North American and Australian experience, participants accepted there is a fundamental need to establish standards and ethics for records managers and other information professionals. However, the professional associations need to take a lead in lobbying politicians with both the problems and some answers!

George Smith
South Australian State Office
Australian Archives

Performance Improvement Conferences and Seminars: Records Management in the Public Sector and Corporate Environment. The Townhouse Hotel, Melbourne, 23-24 June 1994.

This review is based upon the papers presented and published as the proceedings of a two day seminar held in Melbourne in June 1994. The keynote address was delivered by Steve Stuckey, Australian Archives, who explored the issues associated with linking records management to accountability. His analysis highlighted a number of instances where official bodies such as the West Australian 'WA Inc' Royal Commission, Queensland's Fitzgerald Enquiry and subsequent Criminal Justice Commission, the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Commonwealth Auditor-General have exposed aspects of corruption, misuse of power or poor administrative practice. In each instance cited, great reliance had been placed upon documents to judge whether any wrongdoing had occurred. Stuckey's conclusion that 'records form the basis of accountability' seems hardly open to dispute. However, how governments go about ensuring that records do form the basis of accountability is perhaps the central issue of the paper. Solutions such as developing a culture of corporate recordkeeping, harnessing technology and instilling in records managers and archivists a vision and purpose beyond being repositories for old records that no one wants, offered a grand vision and made for a worthy paper to set the scene.

The following papers addressed a variety of issues pertinent to the main theme of records management in the public sector and corporate environment revealing that the corporate archivist and records manager have to deal with an increasingly turbulent environment. The papers generally were of a high standard. However, the paper on 'Standards in Records Management' by David Moldrich was a disappointment given the critical role that standards will take in furthering recordkeeping principles. Issue must be taken with statements such as, 'Because records and document management are somewhat abstract procedures, it is difficult to qualify the principles of sound records management at a level appropriate to a standard'. There is also confusion between the terms 'record' and 'information' which are used synonymously and give the paper a very disjointed outlook.

A group of papers addressed a range of information technology topics. Bill Hewett from Deakin University explored the complexities of the issues relating to the application of information systems and information technology to business processes. His paper is heavy going but many important issues are covered. Greg O'Shea, Australian Archives, covered the fertile fields of electronic records management in particular the appraisal and disposal of, and access to, records in this format. While a lot has been written and said on

this topic recently the paper provides a useful summary of the problems occurring and the strategies being assessed to resolve the problems. In a similar vein Glen Trestrail from Apple Computers looked at emerging trends in computer application software and hardware. These include creating increasingly more complex documents by integrating information from more than one source without changing the software, standards in software, developing 'centric' computing (using one application for many different tasks) and systems which allow for technology to provide a digital signature to authenticate decisions which in the past could only be achieved on paper. The papers dealing with the technological issues show that technology is developing at such a rate that it will be very difficult for archivists and records managers to cope with in terms of managing the corporate memory and providing strategic direction to those organisations which have recognised the problems ahead.

The joint paper by Brand Hoff and Bob Trewin considered the future for records management software. Unfortunately the format for this paper in the conference proceedings was to reproduce overhead slides with no explanatory text making it difficult to follow. The value of including papers in this format is questionable as they have little meaning.

Another set of papers used case studies to outline how particular issues were addressed. Julie Apps of the City of Caulfield set out the issues surrounding the integration of records management systems resulting from the amalgamation process occurring within local government in Victoria. The paper provides many useful ideas which would also have an application outside of the local government area. The paper by Terry Swingler of Melbourne Water examines the reasons for, and outcomes likely to result from the decision to outsource its storage, retrieval and destruction of secondary records. As the project is not completed the question as to whether outsourcing is an appropriate strategy is left unanswered. The other case study was presented by George Beaton of the Department of Social Security who considered what methods and tools can be used to manage records in the modern office. Unfortunately, the paper included in the proceedings again appeared to be taken from overheads and is difficult to follow.

The final set of papers considered educational matters—both for archivists and records managers and for users of records management systems. Considering the users' perspective were papers from John Behrens, Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania, and David Roberts of the NSW Records Management Office. Behrens' paper suggests that a combination of information resource management, defining business values and accountability will provide users with a perspective on records management.

Roberts documents the trend in organisations for users to assume more recordkeeping responsibility. This leads into the area of developing corporate records management as a distinct stream and quite different from the traditional role which focused upon custody and control. The emphasis would be at the strategic level and involve high-level planning and managing records to serve corporate requirements. Both papers touch on an issue which is likely to be more prominent over the next few years, that is defining what records management really is and working out its role in an organisation.

With regard to educating records managers and archivists, Sue McKemmish from Monash University set out the philosophical base underpinning the teaching of archives and records management within the context of recordkeeping. Much has been achieved but considerably more remains to be tackled.

The final paper in the proceedings was by solicitor Geoff Pryor from Davies Collison Cave in which he addressed the interesting issue of securing records from unauthorised access or manipulation. Laws relating to copyright, patents and protection of intellectual copyright are discussed as is the situation relating to use and misuse of information contained in computer systems.

The conference provided an opportunity for the presentation of papers which addressed many varying aspects of records management. The conclusion that can be drawn is that much remains to be fully explained, adequately researched and finally put into practice. The proceedings from this conference document the wide range of important issues which confront recordkeepers. The organisers should be congratulated on their efforts in assembling a wide diversity of speakers without drifting from the core theme.

Philip Taylor
Records Manager
The University of Queensland

Records Management Association of Australia, Victorian Branch State Seminar, Melbourne, 15 April 1994.

An opportunity to attend a full-day professional seminar or conference, have lunch, refreshments, cocktail party and dinner, and subsequently to receive bound seminar papers and still have change out of \$100 represents good value.

The third State Seminar of the RMAA (Vic Branch) was held at the Heidelberg Centre, Ivanhoe, on 15 April 1994. The program was built around

the theme of change—a theme directly addressed in the final offering for the day *The Impact of Change on the Records Management Function* by Shelagh Douglas. This paper indicated how change is managed in a large corporate structure with particular reference to how changes in technology and work practice affect records management and how records management is affected by change in other areas.

It was a theme to which the audience was introduced in the opening session by Russ James—*Nice System, Shame About the Data*—which dwelt upon the crucial difference between good systems design and good data management. Several speakers and writers have in recent years highlighted the natural transition from paper based records management to data management in the electronic office. This paper, which focused particularly on the issues facing data managers when migrating data through systems upgrade, made the point forcibly.

The changing organisational environment in which records managers operate was discussed in several of the remaining sessions. John Sim's paper on *Municipal Restructuring* had a symbiotic relationship with Rosemary Kaczynski's *Merging Records*. Rosemary gave a lively and timely account of the impact on recordkeeping of the merger of the State Bank of Victoria with the Commonwealth Bank. This was not just a history. Rosemary was directly involved and has reflected upon her experience. She was able to give her audience considered, practical and wise advice based on her experience. John Sim, representing local government, emphasised that current municipal amalgamations in Victoria are only the latest stage in a process of innovation which has been going on for some time. He too gave practical advice on how to deal with it and the two speakers largely agreed in their recommendations.

After lunch, Paul O'Brien focused on one aspect of change in the municipal area in his paper, *FOI in Local Government—The Hands on Issues*. In a companion paper also dealing with change imposed from without, Tom Hotchin, from the Blood Bank, described how his organisation had developed new records management procedures in response to external demands for greater accountability leading to a requirement for very high quality records needed to monitor the blood supply — *Accountability, Standards and Quality Programs in Records Management*.

Frank Upward was thoughtful and challenging in his paper *Adapting to Change Records Management Education at Monash University*. This was not simply a review of what has happened at Monash, but an assessment of training needs and possibilities generally and at all levels. This sparked perhaps the most lively discussion of the day on how best to deliver external

training at non-tertiary levels and through short courses. Perhaps this was the one programming failure of the day. Because this session brought together so many of the issues from other papers, it might better have been brought on last.

Chris Hurley
Public Record Office, Victoria

Exhibitions

Families on the Move: Changing the Face of Australia, 1945-1960. An exhibition by Australian Archives, Victorian Office, for the Victorian Heritage Festival. Casselden Place, Melbourne. 11-22 April 1994.

This was Australian Archives Victorian Office's fifth exhibition for the Victorian Heritage Festival. Like last year's exhibition, *Alien Edwardians: Chinese Immigrants and the Commonwealth Government, 1901-1920*, it had a strong personal focus, although this time there was a more discerning selection of textual records as well as a number of interesting photographs.

The exhibition emerged from the Heritage Week's theme, 'Heritage on the Move', together with the 1994 United Nation's theme, 'The Year of the Family'. It brought to life a recent era in our immigration history which many of us were a part of, the immediate postwar period, during which the dominance of migration from the British Isles to Australia was broken by the large scale arrival of continental Europeans. This changed the face and norms of Anglo-Celtic Australian society forever.

The venue chosen for the exhibition was the foyer of Casselden Place, the City Office of Australian Archives Victorian Office. This building also houses the Australian Taxation Office. Thus a cross-section of the public pass through the foyer. In addition exhibition flyers were sent to immigration authorities, researchers on Australian Archives' mailing list, ethnic press and associations, and other professional bodies associated with Australian Archives. General publicity was also provided through the Heritage Week organisation, all of which had ensured a broad public viewing. A 'comments book' placed near the exhibition revealed some very emotional and at times controversial responses to the exhibition.

The exhibition was thoughtfully curated by Esther Carey and Loreta Tabellione, members of Australian Archives Victorian State Office staff. Their work demonstrated the effectiveness of a relatively inexpensive exhibition, in terms of materials used, including reusable panels for mounting exhibits.

The exhibits, mostly from the regional collection, were enlarged black and white photocopies of text records and photographic copies of photographic records, mounted on foam and laminated.

The theme selected was interpreted into sub-themes, focusing on well known slogans of the period such as 'Bring Out a Briton', 'Populate or Perish', and 'Good Neighbours and New Australians'. Other sub-themes were based on immigration processes and settlement procedures, including alien registration, selection, and naturalisation, and issues such as educational qualifications and assimilation. Stories of individual immigrants who were identified by name were provided willingly by local staff of Australian Archives and their families to avoid any sensitivity regarding privacy.

Six double-sided panels, four large and two smaller ones, arranged in a zig-zag fashion which followed through sequentially, provided the structure for the physical presentation and layout of the exhibition. Each text panel concentrated on a sub-theme or related sub-themes and was followed by a selection of text or photographic documents on these themes. A viewer could thus choose to peruse the entire exhibition or concentrate on a theme of particular interest. The text panels were written in simple language.

There was a balanced use of photographs, printed official immigration pamphlets, process documents, and individual letters to authorities which could be read in isolation or with the text panel. Clear numbered citations of sources were found with all exhibits and a citation list was provided for the viewer. There was also an accompanying handout which reproduced the information on the text panels and included selected photocopies of documents. This handout would have benefited from the inclusion of a bibliography of sources used for compiling the text panels.

The selection of documents to illustrate the themes derived from a broad range of Commonwealth government agencies held in Australian Archives, Victoria and one Canberra held item. The linkage of documents related to individuals illustrated the richness of government sources on individuals, for example there were an incoming passenger card, a landing permit and a photograph from a migrant case file, all related to one individual. There were two items copied from private hands which were also linked to government records. A poignant letter from a displaced person separated from his family asking to be reunited with them was particularly striking. The exhibition clearly demonstrated that it is possible to have interesting text as well as visual material for display.

Despite the theme, the exhibition provided a relatively impartial interpretation of the period, allowing the viewer to draw his/her own conclusions from the selection of items presented. For example, a photograph of an Anglo-Celtic mother and baby on the first panel provided a contrast with the final panel of a southern European mother with her children. These photographs also appeared on the advertising flyer and other exhibition handouts and provided an apt illustration of the exhibition theme.

This exhibition, like many other archival ones, illustrated the importance of retaining public records dealing with individuals as a reflection of government policy. Yet these are the records which are often only retained for the lifetime of the person. As Canadian archivist Terry Cook says, they document 'where the citizen interacts with the state to produce the sharpest and clearest insights into societal dynamics and issues'.

School children would have benefited from seeing this exhibition. There would also have been scope to produce an annotated document kit for schools from the documents selected for the exhibition, or other learning kits, based on a similar model to that used by the educational unit of the Museum of Victoria, e.g. for the 1992-93 exhibition *Bridging Two Worlds: Jews, Italians and Carlton*. By-products from exhibitions are a way of gaining greater impact from the enormous amount of work that goes into their preparation.

No doubt we will see an increased emphasis in Australian Archives, Victoria, and Australian Archives nationally, on public programs including exhibitions as a result of its new public programs and publications policy. Australian Archives Victorian Office's Heritage Festival exhibitions provide a good base for a regional program. I also hope that the *Families on the Move* exhibition will be displayed elsewhere.

Livia Iacovino

Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records
Monash University

Endnote

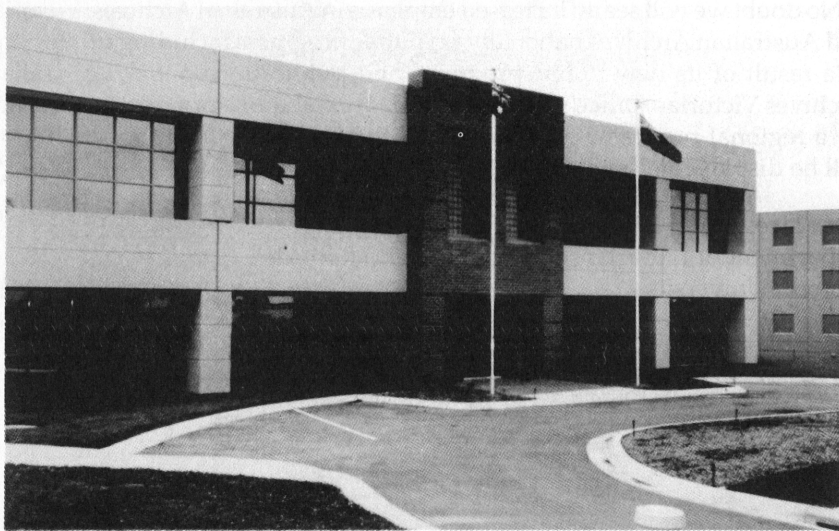
1. Terry Cook, 'Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal', in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Barbara L. Craig, Association of Canadian Archivists, Ottawa, 1992, pp. 49-50.

Buildings

Australian Archives, Victorian Office, East Burwood Repository, 31 Vision Drive, East Burwood.¹

As I drove up Vision Drive for the official opening of Australian Archives' most recent purpose built Commonwealth owned repository on a hot February morning earlier this year, I was struck by the sharp contrast between the pristine building located at the end of the drive and its semi-rural surrounds, and my memory of the former dry cleaning factory situated in suburban Brighton which, since the 1950s, had been home to the Victorian Office staff, and to the largely permanent record holdings of the Victorian Office. The records services staff had already moved into plush city premises at 'Casselden Place', Lonsdale Street, in 1992. For those of us (including myself) who had laboured in that drab 1927 building bought by the Commonwealth government in 1953, East Burwood and Casselden Place can only be viewed as enormous improvements on their former abode in terms of both office accommodation and archival storage.

The Victorian Office of Australian Archives is the last of the State Offices to have a purpose built building for its permanent records, that is for records to be retained in excess of twenty-five years, in a range of physical media. The



*Australian Archives Victorian State Office, East Burwood Repository. Front entrance.
Photo: Australian Archives.*

project has therefore had the advantages of the experiences of the other states, as well as the use of the latest construction and building system technology. Australian Archives has developed specialised expertise in archival buildings which it has made available through consultancy services to organisations requiring assistance in this area.

Various proposals to either redevelop the Brighton site or replace the facility were made from the 1960s. Leased accommodation had been dismissed as an option as it could not provide the required standards for archival storage. The last push for a new building commenced in 1991 with strong arguments put forward on the basis of the detrimental effects on the records of the then current environment, and a cost-benefit analysis of various options. Once the Brighton location had been dismissed as a possible site for a new building, the choice of a new site had to be based on factors which ensured that the building would be away from flood prone areas, industry, flight paths, major highways and in a crime free area. All these requirements have been met with the choice of a Technology Park location on the former Tally Ho estate in East Burwood, twenty-four kilometres east of Melbourne. The location is close to, but set well back from, Springvale Road, a busy major thoroughfare which provides good vehicular access to the city centre and public transport via a bus service.

It has taken three years, including the planning phases, to produce a state-of-the-art archival facility to be envied by the less well endowed states and smaller archival bodies. Actual construction commenced in August 1992 and the building was completed in October 1993. The total cost of the building including the land was \$9.6m. It was designed by Australian Construction Services and built by Prentice Builders Ltd. The total site area is 11 860 square metres (sqm) with the building occupying 2 900 sqm, i.e. its footprint. The building's floor area is 6 112 sqm and it has a storage capacity of 50 000 linear metres. The design includes provision for future storage and office accommodation for at least ten years. There is car parking for twenty vehicles.

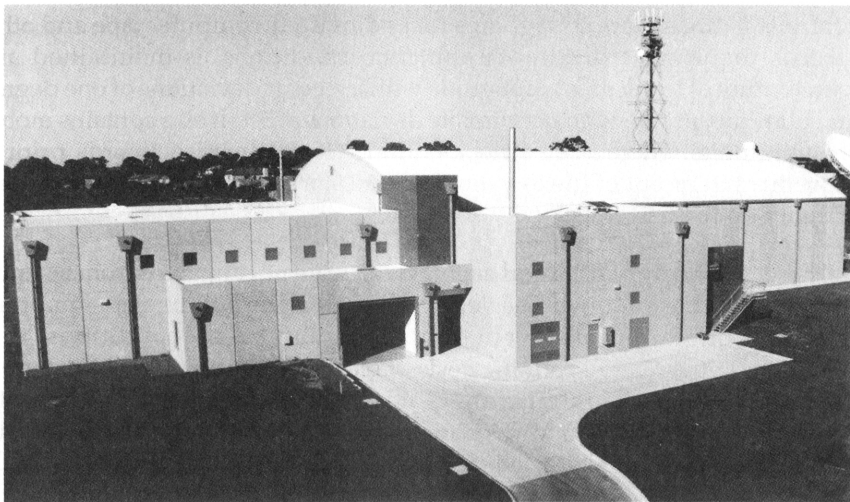
Unlike the recently built Queensland State Archives, East Burwood is not designed as a piece of public architecture. The design is essentially functional but it is in no way an unattractive building. It is symmetrical in both its external and its internal layout. When facing the front of the building one is confronted with a two storey, modern, pre-fabricated, mushroom-brown coloured concrete and glass office-style structure, with the central section of the facade inset by red and glass brick. Basically what one sees from the front is the office accommodation which has been oriented to the east to minimise the afternoon sun. The records storage areas of the building have been cleverly

cut into the site to reduce their visual impact and to reduce the apparent size of the building. In order to conform to a two storey height restriction, a shallow vaulted roof over the main storage area has been included which is not visible from the front of the building, and provides additional storage space on three levels. The loading dock is located on the right side of the building.

The building has three main areas: a records storage area (4 000 sqm), office accommodation (400 sqm), and a preservation/repair wing (280 sqm). Natural light is only found in the office accommodation and the conservation laboratory. A cream and wedgewood blue colour combination provide a restful colour scheme throughout the premises. Two corridors run on both sides of the interior of the building and lifts are found in the centre with access only from the right corridor near the loading bay. There are two sets of emergency staircases in the interior of the building. Three plant rooms accommodate specialised airconditioning systems and are found on different levels of the building.

One enters the building through automatic glass doors. The granite tiled reception counter is flanked by two more doors. Passing through one of these doors, one enters into an open office area divided by a central staircase. A display of facsimile prints, posters, and drawings from Australian Archives' own holdings enlivens the plain walls, and a model of the Burwood building in a glass display case sits prominently to the right of the staircase. The lending staff who occupy this open area are positioned to watch the search room and the reception desk. The Facilities Manager's office and a search room are found to the right, and another office and storage area for agency self service to the left. A processing section is found behind the lending area. Toilets, showers, a storeroom and some of the plant rooms are also found on this floor. On the upper floor to the right, there is the Regional Director's office and a project office used by disposal staff, and to the left, a conference/amenities area, all of which can be reached via the central staircase. The conference facilities are excellent, with provision for forty people if the room is fully seated. It is equipped with a projection system linked to a video and computer system. The amenities area can be screened off or used in conjunction with the conference area.

The preservation repair wing on the ground floor is a conservator's delight. The laboratory occupies 130 sqm. The area also includes storage for chemicals, materials and equipment, and an office for the conservator. There is good natural and artificial light, separate wet and dry work spaces, large built-in benches, a fume cupboard with an exhaust fan, and a de-acidification trough. A microfilming/reprography room and a dark room are found on the opposite side of the corridor to the conservation laboratory. Although these are not in



The shallow vaulted Spandek Hi-Ten roof over Australian Archives Victorian Office, East Burwood repository ensures the integrity of the records. Photo: BHP.

operation, the appropriate requirements for outfitting them have been built into their design. The disaster recovery / airing room / box store is located near the loading bay. Apart from operating as a quarantine area for records with mould or insect infestation, it also doubles up as a store room for archival boxes on roll-out pallets.

On venturing into the storage areas located on all three levels of the building, one is greeted with row upon row of gleaming metal shelves and polished vinyl floors. All shelved records are in acid-free boxes. The floor has been constructed from reinforced concrete and has a loading of twelve kpa minimum strength. The storage areas are primarily designed for paper records in addition to magnetic and film media. Provision has also been made for odd-shaped objects.

There is an area of 3 400 sqm for general storage. Shelving in the general storage area consists of mechanically assisted, friction driven, mobile steel edge upright shelving units operating on a three track configuration with tracking sunk into the floor and flush with the vinyl. The constant temperature here is maintained at $18\% \pm 2$ degrees and $50\% \pm 5\%$ humidity. An area of 250 sqm within this general area has been set aside for special storage. It contains mobile plan cabinets, static shelving and fixed racking for irregular objects. There is also a class B security vault of 100 sqm within the ground floor storage area, which is outfitted with mobile shelving units. A low temperature

controlled atmosphere storage area for audiovisual, computer tape and other records requiring critical environmental conditions, is maintained at a temperature of ten degrees centigrade with irregular deviations of one degree, and humidity at 35% with permissible deviations at 5%. It also contains mobile shelving units. There is an airlock entrance to acclimatise records prior to movement in or out of the low temperature storage area. This area occupies 150 sqm on the first floor.

There is an array of technical aspects which are not apparent from a simple inspection of the building. The design features of the building are important in supporting appropriate environmental and safety conditions, thus diminishing the overall running costs of electrical equipment. For example, insulation aspects minimise the potential for external environmental conditions to alter the conditions maintained in the storage areas. Disaster prevention controls include the steel frames and the concrete structure of the building, together with the fire-rated walls for a period of four hours for the storage area and two for the office area, the angle of the roof pitch which reduces the potential of water entry, and external downpipes and drainage all designed to lead to external outlets. There are no windows in the storage areas in order to reduce the effects of light and heat on the records.

In addition to the building design features which contribute to maintaining a stable environment in the storage areas at all times, the air-conditioning system ensures that three separate air-conditioned areas are maintained, that is for the office areas, the general storage areas and the low temperature controlled atmosphere storage area. The office areas are only air-conditioned during office hours. There is constant air movement throughout the storage areas as well as a fresh air intake of 10%. A filtration system filters out 95% of dust particles up to two microns or greater and other contaminants. To assist in monitoring these conditions a building/energy management system has been installed. The Digital Data Control System (DDC) ensures that the environmental conditions in the storage areas are maintained and that faults in the air-conditioning system are detected. Using a time scheduling system, the system also controls the aisle lighting in the storage areas to reduce both the amount of light and the cost of electricity. There are also time switches for lighting in the shelving areas. There is provision for emergency auxiliary power from a generator available from external sources in the event of a power failure.

A Grade 1 security system has been installed through a variety of detection devices including reed switches fitted to perimeter openings and motion detectors in strategic positions in the building. Entrance doors to storage areas

and to the front door operate on proximity readers carried by staff. All staff also carry a radio pager linked to the front door bell. The security devices are linked to a computerised system (Honeywell Excel Security Manager) which monitors who enters an area and the time of entry. The security system is connected to an outside security service company.

Fire detection is provided by smoke and heat detectors connected to a central alarm panel with a direct connection to the local fire brigade. A Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus (VESDA) system is installed in the low temperature areas and the security vault where water damage from sprinklers is to be avoided if possible. A dry pipe sprinkler system operates in these areas. All standard storage areas are fully sprinkled with a wet pipe system. Internal fire hoses and extinguishers have been installed in the building. An Early Warning Intercom System (EWIS) sounds an alarm throughout the building in case of a fire.

In terms of the functioning of the building in relation to the city office, researchers have a twenty-four hour turnaround time from requesting records to their delivery from Burwood to the city premises. The search room at Burwood is only used for bulk records searching at present. Given the location and ease of access to Burwood there are likely to be public patrons who would prefer this location to the city. Staff located in the city spend time as needed at Burwood.

Although in the future electronic records accessed through computer networks may see the end of the development of large storage areas for physical records, it is unlikely that the paper records already in archival custody will be transferred en masse into other formats. The East Burwood Repository has the facilities to cater for the existing record needs of the Commonwealth Government in Victoria. It is both a functionally efficient building, as well as an excellent show piece for Australian Archives. It deserves to be used more by both the public, other archival organisations and Australian Archives' own clients.

Livia Iacovino
Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records
Monash University

Endnote

- 1 I would like to thank Les Cargill, Facilities Manager, Australian Archives East Burwood Repository, for his assistance and for allowing me to have a personalised tour of the building. Les was Project Officer, Central Office Facilities Section 1990–93, which involved him in the relocation of the Victorian Office to its city premises at Casselden Place and the construction of the East Burwood facility.