

News Notes

Edited by Helen Yoxall

Ashfield Council Archives

Correspondents: Gaye Pracy and Anne Stevens

We, the archivists at Ashfield Council have been referred to as 'Subterranean Cave Dwellers'. This description, whilst communicated in a jovial manner, has an element of truth in it. The location of the archives could indeed be referred to as subterranean, as it is located in a secure basement storage area under Council Civic Centre, where only the enlightened dare to venture.

In our clandestine abode 1995 has seen some exciting things happen. The year began with staff numbers being increased from one to two part-time archivists, allowing for the section to be open for public and in-house inquiries three days a week (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday).

In February a display was mounted in Ashfield's public library using original archival items, and in March the archives reclaimed possession of Council's first eleven Minute Books (1872-1904). These volumes have been in the custody of the Mitchell Library since 1913 and so a great deal of in-house excitement and local area interest has been generated by their return.

The installation of a new air-conditioning unit was the highlight for April and in May, as a result of an organisational restructure within Council, the function of the archives was transferred from the library to the records section under the umbrella of the Corporate Services Division. The first half of the year concluded with the commencement of our microfilming program of our archival records.

Since its establishment in 1990 the Archives section has grown to become an effective section within Council. Duties include appraising and accessioning, listing and boxing as well as handling research inquiries from council officers and local, interstate and international researchers. The Principal Archivist, Anne Stevens has produced several 'Historic Walks' of the area which have been used by Council as promotional material and she has become a regular contributor to Council publications writing articles based on information held within the archives. Council's support of our endeavours has been both satisfying and encouraging.

Future projects include expanding the microfilming program; extending the existing conservation program; launching ourselves into the technological age i.e. the acquisition of a computer and much much more. Indeed, Anne and myself may be described as 'Subterranean Cave Dwellers', but our days are far from dull. Though probably biased, we think ours is the pick of all the occupations on offer within our organisation.

Australian Archives/Advisory Council on Australian Archives

Correspondents: Steve Stuckey and Ted Ling

Australian Archives

During the past six months the Archives maintained its day-to-day core services to agencies and the public, both in Canberra and through its State offices, in the face of a difficult funding environment and growing commitments and expectations. Thus as part of its on-going programs to coordinate a regime for the management of Commonwealth records, in June the Archives issued a general disposal schedule covering certain standard kinds of security and intelligence agency records (GDA 21), and implemented on 1 July new custody arrangements for the storage of short term temporary value records.

The first results of a systems integration and redevelopment project were also received during the year. The report of the project's business modelling working party supports the Archives' key strategic directions by recommending ways to achieve increased efficiency (e.g. reducing duplication) and better customer service (including stronger focus for researchers at the item level).

It is expected that improvements in 'public accessibility' in its widest sense will follow recent initiatives also linked to strategic directions. The first involves the 'Archives of Australia' Web site at <http://www.aa.gov.au> which was released in late July and plans are well advanced to have a version of the RINSE database available via this Web site. A new brochure to assist users has also been printed and distributed called *Using the Australian Archives to help you research your thesis*. Another initiative is the use of the Sydney-based market research firm Environmetrics to provide guidance for the development and evaluation of an Archives marketing and communications program. The report 'Market perceptions of Australian Archives' has just been received. While its recommendations look to the future, current public access avenues such as public exhibitions continue to be used. Two exhibitions recently in

Canberra, 'An Ideal City? The 1912 Competition for the Design of Canberra' and 'John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War' will tour in other states next year, as will two earlier Canberra based exhibitions, 'Between Two Worlds' and 'Making our Mark'.

Good progress has been achieved with the development of a documentation standard and electronic records policy for the Australian public service. Agency and Archives staff have provided comments on the first documentation standards outline, and a further draft is currently on circulation. The latest version of the electronic records policy, *Keeping Electronic Records; policy for electronic recordkeeping in the Commonwealth Government*, was released in September and will be discussed at the Australian Council on Archives workshop in Sydney in October.

Advisory Council on Australian Archives

Rodney Cavalier (NSW) was appointed as Chairman of the Council from 12 March 1995 and two new members, Bob Sharman (WA) and Eugenia Hill (SA), were appointed from 1 July 1995. Bob Sharman is the first professional archivist and the first Western Australian resident to serve on the Council. The appointment of Dr Carol Liston—who had served with the Council since 1989—expired on 7 August.

The Council has two active subcommittees. A Public Awareness subcommittee has been established to promote the public role of the Australian Archives. It will shortly be reporting to the Director-General of the Australian Archives regarding a number of pertinent issues including the possible introduction of a records management awards scheme in the Australian Public Service and the development of a Friends of the Archives scheme. Members are keenly interested in the permanent retention of name related census returns and have lobbied to have the returns kept and made available to the public after a suitable time period has elapsed. They have undertaken considerable research in this area and it is hoped that the results of this research can soon be published.

The Freedom of Information subcommittee has been established to monitor the review of the Freedom of Information Act being undertaken by the Law Reform Commission. It is coordinating a submission to the Commission on behalf of the Council.

Australian War Memorial - Research Centre

Correspondent: Carolyn Theodore

Printed and Written Records

Negotiation has continued this year for the acquisition of the personal papers of Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop. Private records staff have concentrated on identifying periods which are not well represented in the collection. The First World War is best represented while the Second World War has become a growth area in recent times. In contrast the Vietnam period is noticeably under-represented. In order to enable these deficiencies to be supplemented, Private Records staff have been actively approaching unit associations in addition to responding to potential donor inquiries as they occur.

Printed Records has seen the analysis of the Special Collections as a priority this year. The Special Collections comprise several formats including postcards, aerial photographs, maps and charts, news clippings, philately, souvenirs (e.g. menus and ration cards), sheet music, cigarette and trade cards, Christmas cards and architectural drawings. The collection varies in the extent to which it is arranged, documented, and as a result, its accessibility for research. An added and as yet not fully known concern is the monetary value of the items which has implications for the level of security required for storage and reference. Printed records staff would be very pleased to receive suggestions from people who have managed similar items in their collections.

Official records staff have focused on the planning stages for the microfilming of AWM 52, 2nd AIF and CMF unit war diaries, 1939-45 War. The other priority this year has been assessing the collection for series which are approaching the (30 year) open period and preparing for their access examination and release. This relates primarily to the Vietnam period which is anticipated to generate considerable public interest. Official records staff are attempting to strategically prepare for this demand through liaison with the Department of Defence and Army to arrange pre-clearance and declassification and participation on Australian Archives' Interdepartmental Committee on Access.

Photographs, Sound and Film

The impact of the Commonwealth government's program of commemoration for *Australia Remembers 1945-95* has considerably affected the ability of the Section to undertake preservation activities and documentation of the collection. An indication of this is the number of orders for photographs from

the collection which have doubled this year compared with statistics of previous years. The main acquisition emphasis is now on peacekeeping in order to remedy what has been highlighted as a gap in the collection.

James Cook University of North Queensland

Correspondent: June Edwards

In the last twelve months the University Archivist has gained responsibility for the Records Section, the Mail Room and Freedom of Information. Recently most of the Archivist's time has been spent on records management issues. A team has assessed various records management packages and recommended the purchase of RecFind. The scanning of records has been deferred for future consideration.

The most wonderful thing which has happened is the employment of Rosemary Sempell for two days per week for the rest of the year. Rosemary will be organising the various photographic accessions and preparing an exhibition for Open Uni in August.

The proceedings of last year's ASA conference, 'Archives in the Tropics' have been printed and distributed.

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

Correspondent: Arthur Easton

The acquisition of the journal of seaman Jacob Nagle (1762-1841) is a valuable addition to literature documenting the voyage of the First Fleet and the settlement of Port Jackson. A crewman aboard HMS *Sirius*, Nagle was also a member of Governor Phillip's boat crew and so took part in the earliest exploration of Port Jackson and Broken Bay. He also spent six months on Norfolk Island in 1790 after the *Sirius* foundered on a reef, before returning to Port Jackson and thence to England. An American, born in Pennsylvania, Nagle wrote lucid and vivid prose.

A long series of letters from artist Donald Friend to his close friend and confidant Donald Murray has been acquired recently. Letters are posted from England, Nigeria, Italy and Sri Lanka as well as various Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland addresses. Many of the letters, which cover the years 1939-1952, are illustrated with pen and ink sketches. Also, more papers of Isaac Nathan (1790-1864), the first significant European musician to settle and

practice his profession in Australia, have been acquired lately, including manuscript sheet music to parts of 'Merry Freaks in Troublous Times'.

Recently processed organisational collections of papers include the records of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, 1978–1995, records of caterer and restaurateur Anders Ousback, 1982–1989, records of the Kindergarten Union, New South Wales, 1893–1993, and records of ACT UP (Aids Coalition to Unleash Power), 1990–1993.

Two exhibitions have opened in the Galleries in the last few months. 'The work of art: Australian women writers and artists' looks at aspects of the life of more than fifty Australian women and covers almost 200 years. It includes a changing program which profiles the work of contemporary artists and writers such as Tracey Moffat, Anne Zahalka and *geekgirl*. It runs until February 1996. Some of the most lively and passionate posters of recent times have been produced by small collectives with few resources; this work is the subject of 'Out of line: 25 years of women's posters', which charts many of the social and political issues of the day.

Monash University Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records

Correspondent: Livia Iacovino

The Department successfully launched itself in 1995 into the new undergraduate Bachelor of Information Management course, particularly with its first year offering of Documenting Society as two sequential semester subjects drawing from the specialisations within the department. This has resulted in a unique subject which considers the range of documentary forms in which information is recorded in our society. Semester I focuses on the unique features of archival and literary documents, the media on which they have been and are currently being recorded, and the different features of recordkeeping systems, information systems, and library systems. Semester II considers documents in terms of their role in the networked society, taking into account their significance in relation to public policy, access and equity issues, and their transmission across time and space, with an introduction to the professions that manage different forms of documents in our society.

In addition to the undergraduate area the Department has continued to develop and revise its postgraduate offerings, in particular by introducing a Masters by coursework for both librarianship and archives and records, and a Masters by research in archives and records.

The May 1995 news notes mentioned the resignation of the Head of the Department, Professor John Levett and the appointment of Sue McKemmish as acting Head of the Department. The review of the Department which followed the resignation has been completed and it is anticipated at the time of writing that the position of Head of Department will be advertised in 1995, looking to a new appointment expected in 1996. The expansion of the Department's programs has also led to proposals for additional staff in the near future.

The archives and records graduate programs in the Department have continued to attract international students from all corners of the globe, with current students from Vietnam, Malaysia, Zambia, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea. A number of our international students are working in professional positions in their home countries and bring an alternative cultural perspective to the courses.

In July the Department ran a conference and seminar which featured Professor Richard Cox, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of Pittsburgh. The conference, titled 'Research Standards and Software Development in Records Management', was directed at records managers, archivists, and information professionals, and sought to provide up-to-date information about research and development work in the recordkeeping field and its links to standard development, as well as related software development. The seminar, titled 'The Recordkeeping Continuum and the Evolution of the Profession', in which Cox also participated, explored the recordkeeping continuum model, and its impact on professional identity and practice. Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward from the Department presented the model as developed in the Monash recordkeeping courses, while Richard Cox's analysis of the University of Pittsburgh's functional requirements for recordkeeping examined its impact on American recordkeeping professions. The impact of the new philosophy on professional practice was discussed by a number of practitioners.

The department has also committed itself to consultancy work on behalf of the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology which is aimed at determining best practices for recordkeeping in key functional areas of the department and faculty layers within the University. A number of research proposals relating to the capture, compliance and auditing methodologies for recordkeeping have also been submitted.

Mortlock Library of South Australiana

Correspondent: Roger Andre

The archival database is now 'live', and for those with access to the Internet can be accessed through the State Library of South Australia's main catalogue. Completion of the task of producing a brief record for every record group is anticipated for early 1996. Response from those introduced to the salient features of the database has generally been positive and it is hoped that upgrading of the records from 'brief' to 'full', including appropriate subject indexing, will be equally well received. Retrospective indexing will take some years to achieve. New accessions are to be entered on the system as full records.

Accessions to which processing priority has been given have been records of packaging designers Wytt Morro & Son, complete with exquisite art work for wine labels, the Searcy photographic collection which has 'come home' from the Mitchell Library and papers of Barossa Music Festival Director, Brenton Langbein. This last, including full scores of original compositions ca. 1949-1950, has been taken in hand by archivist Neil Thomas, for once bringing his music degree into play. Cooperage records, hitherto unrepresented, have been accessioned by way of records R. Babidge & Sons, 1891-1984. Papers of journalist and equestrienne, Nora Kelly, who rode from the Darling River to Adelaide in 1937, document an interesting career.

Notable additions to the pictorial collection have included a fine John Goodchild watercolour of Robe across Lake Butler and expertly tinted lantern slides 1898-1900.

On the exhibitions front, Reference Archivist Prue Brooks has used archival resources illustrative of the themes of 'theatres of war', 'women at war', 'life at home' and 'celebration and homecoming', in curating an *Australia Remembers* exhibition.

Australia Remembers 1945-1995 has also been the focus of public libraries projects supported by oral history officer Beth Robertson by way of training and equipment. At the same time, the South Australian phase of the Department of Veterans' Affairs interviews with the remaining First World War veterans has received similar assistance. South Australia's contribution towards another national project, the 'Towards Federation 2001 Directory of Oral History and Folklore Collections', is progressing well. A program which the Oral History Officer has particularly enjoyed has been garnering radio stalwarts to undertake local interviews for 'Once Upon a Wireless: An Oral History of Australian Commercial Radio'.

NRMA Corporate Archives

Correspondent: Helen Ahern

The NRMA Corporate Archive was set up in February 1994 under the control of contract part-time archivist Judy Seeff. The Archive came into being with the mission that it should become the recognised repository of significant NRMA historical records. These include the collection of material required for research to support the writing of NRMA's history *On the road*—the NRMA's first seventy-five years due for publication early 1996 and to source the NRMA Museum, both of which are in celebration of seventy-five years of NRMA service and advocacy for the New South Wales motorist.

The NRMA began as a road service organisation, the reason for its existence being a concerted campaign, begun in 1920, for the betterment of roads in New South Wales. The organisation grew from a motorist lobby group to become a large motoring assistance organisation and the largest general insurer in Australia with NRMA Insurance expanding into Victoria (1994) and Queensland (1995). The NRMA has been providing road service to New South Wales motorists since 1924 when three 'Guides' were appointed to provide mechanical first aid. Initially, guides, later patrols, were provided with motor cycles as a means of transport. Vans were later used and even bicycles were provided during the Second World War as a means of saving fuel. Both motorcycles and vans are currently in use as service vehicles.

The organisation has over 5 200 employees working in nine Divisions—Retail, Association, Insurance, Financial Services, Community and Customer Relations, Finance and Administration, Information Services, Human Resource, Group Secretary and General Counsel.

The Archive now has a full-time corporate archivist reporting to the Manager, Corporate Programs who in turn reports to the General Manager, Community and Customer Relations Division. The records held are a mixture of objects and paper records, film and audio material. It is expected that the holdings of paper records will increase as time goes on. Members and ex-staff have been very generous in their donations of memorabilia and paper records of interest to be used in the NRMA Museum and as documentation of NRMA's past. The Archive is in-house although it is accessible to members and the general public, by appointment, as well as to staff. It is located in Clarence Street, Sydney near the NRMA head office and may be contacted on (02) 260 8760 or facsimile (02) 260 8089.

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Section

Correspondent: Graeme Powell

The National Library has been fortunate in acquiring the papers of two household names: Lindy Chamberlain and Eddie Mabo. The Chamberlain papers are extensive and include family letters, personal memorabilia and the drafts of Ms Chamberlain's book *Through my eyes*. In particular, there are letters written to Lindy Chamberlain and her family from thousands of people in all walks of life who were convinced that she was innocent of the murder of her daughter, as well as a smaller number who were convinced that she was guilty. Extending over the period 1982–1992, the letters are a valuable record of public opinion not only on a famous legal case but on general subjects such as the law, religion, the media and the family. Eddie Koiki Mabo, the Torres Strait Islander whose name is linked to the High Court judgment on native title, was little known in his lifetime. His papers document many of his interests and passions, including his involvement in Aboriginal health, housing, educational and arts organisations and his support for Torres Strait Islander self-determination. In addition, the Library has acquired a comprehensive collection of the documents used in the Mabo case.

There have been two other notable acquisitions. The manuscripts of the artist John Olsen comprise an illustrated autobiographical work, 'My complete graphics 1957–1979', and a spectacular 'journal' recording the painting of the 'Five Bells' mural in the Sydney Opera House in 1971–1973. The acquisition of the papers of Manning Clark has been completed with the transfer of his journals, correspondence and other papers which he had bequeathed to the Library. The bequest stipulated that they were to be closed for ten years, but ultimately they will be a splendid source on the life of Australia's best known historian.

Although the Australian Joint Copying Project ended in 1993, the Library continues to publish handbooks describing the AJCP microfilm. A new edition of Part 6 of the AJCP Handbook has been issued, listing Air Ministry, Treasury, Board of Trade, Audit Office, Cabinet Office and other official British records filmed by the Project. Editorial work on the twentieth instalment of the *Guide to collections of manuscripts relating to Australia* has been completed. It is likely to be the last instalment produced on microfiche. Shortly the future of the Guide in the electronic age will be under review, involving consultations with archivists, librarians and historians.

Northern Territory Archives Service

Correspondent: Diane Foster

Gypsies, vagabonds and wanderers. No, we are none of these really—it just seems that way. After reporting in the last issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* about our move to Myilly Point we have gone through the process of moving our administration to another temporary location. We are sharing the fifth floor of Capricornia House with NT Library Services and expect to be there until the end of the year. Fortunately, our friends at Australian Archives have assisted in continuing to relocate our archival holdings.

Plans are underway to relocate us into our next permanent building which until recently was the home of the State Reference Library now renamed Northern Territory Library since its amalgamation with the Parliamentary Library. The move will really be 'coming home' for us since we first began operation in 1984 as the Northern Territory Archives Service in the Cavanagh Street building in the heart of Darwin. Two of the original staff members are still with us and are thrilled to be moving 'back home'.

Not only have we changed premises but parents too. In a reshuffling of portfolios by our new Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, we are now a unit of Transport and Works within the Business Services Group. A most unusual place for an Archives unit admittedly, but early signs indicate that we will be well looked after. Discussions are underway for commercial storage facilities of our secondary records.

We are reviewing our Archives and Records Management System (ARMS) which will enable us to implement all phases of administration. The system was designed three years ago and is being updated to accommodate changes in technology. In addition, disposal of electronic records is another issue which we are beginning to come to terms with through a working party involving several government departments.

We will keep our colleagues informed as we progress through the above projects.

Parramatta City Council

Correspondent: Tracy Bradford

In April 1995, Parramatta City Council appointed Tracy Bradford, formerly of the Archives Office of New South Wales, to the position of Archivist, replacing Susan Davidson who resigned at the end of 1994 to take up a position

with WorkCover Authority. Although Tracy is the third archivist to be employed by Council, the position is a relatively new one, with the first appointment being made in early 1993. Prior to the appointment of an archivist, the Council's Records Officer was responsible for maintaining the archives; the huge backlog of work that exists at present is testimony to the unsatisfactory nature of this arrangement.

For many years, Council has stored a large proportion of its archives at the now derelict Dundas Town Hall. This building has not been used for any other purpose for quite a while. Apart from collapsed foundations in the main body of the hall, the various rooms off the main hall (added over a period of time in a fairly ad hoc way) present major problems for storing records. Not the least of these is the fact that the roof leaks very badly, and in places is in danger of collapsing. In addition, the windows do not seal adequately and dust and pollution from the Council Works Depot (which shares the site) and nearby Marsden Road penetrate all areas. There is no air-conditioning system, or means of regulating humidity which remains constantly high.

Due to the problems mentioned above, and years of neglect, the archives stored at Dundas Town Hall are very dirty, with mould outbreaks detected on records in areas worst affected by leaks. The physical conditions there also led to the building being declared an occupational health and safety hazard, meaning that the Archivist could not continue to work there. Thus the priorities for the Archivist pretty much set themselves: the records had to be cleaned and removed to a more suitable location as a matter of urgency. The first step in this process was to engage a consultant from Conservation Access at the State Library of NSW to conduct a conservation needs survey. This was completed in December 1994, and was funded by a grant from the National Preservation Office. The report recommended that the collection be cleaned and that mould affected items be isolated and removed for fumigation. Cleaning of the records took place over a five week period commencing in May 1995, and records requiring fumigation were removed in June.

The cleaned records were removed from Dundas in June and temporarily housed in the Central Library building in Parramatta. A new Heritage Resource Centre has been built but is yet to fitted out. If funding becomes available, it is anticipated that the records will be removed to the new centre by the end of the year, ready for the public opening in March 1996. The new centre will house the Archives, the Local Studies Collection and a Museum.

One of the next priorities for the Archivist is to appraise the mountain of material which has been sitting at Dundas, and to implement the provisions

of the Local Government Records Disposal Schedule. With the current scarcity of staff, this task will take quite some time. However, it is hoped that staffing numbers will be increased in the 1995–96 financial year. Apart from the Archivist, there is an archives assistant. At present, the archives does not seek to attract reference inquiries as the resources do not exist to carry out a reference function. However, unsolicited inquiries are received from members of the public quite regularly, as are inquiries from within Council.

Another task requiring urgent attention is the formulation of policies relating to the operation of the archives. These policies, once written, must then be ratified by Council. Hopefully by the time this goes to print, this process will be well on the road to completion. In addition to policies, the archives is in dire need of a budget, something which has not been allowed for in the 1995–96 allocations! How we are to operate without a budget is something we are still trying to work out.

Public Record Office of Victoria

Correspondent: Ian MacFarlane

A total of 28 664 people visited the Public Record Office search rooms during the past financial year (a 4.7 per cent increase), more than 5 000 of whom were first time visitors. Nearly 11 000 telephone inquiries were handled by reference services staff.

Government reforms in Victoria, particularly those within the public service and in local government, have led to intense pressures in some areas of governmental records management. The Public Record Office has responded to this with several new programs. These include the Local Government Records Transfer Kit and associated training sessions, and the APROSS initiative. APROSS (Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier) enables commercial storage companies to store unsentenced and sentenced temporary government records, providing they meet strict storage criteria and on-site inspections.

Over 1 500 shelf metres of records were transferred to the Laverton Repository for permanent retention during 1994–95 with a further 2 503 shelf metres for review. In addition, the Office authorised destruction of 14 644 metres in agencies either through disposal schedules or specific appraisal projects.

Projects previously reported on are progressing well. Transfer has begun of the archives of the City of Melbourne and the former State Bank of Victoria.

Close cooperation between the Office and the Directorate of School Education has resulted in the arrangement and description of the archives of 498 closed schools being completed in the year and in the Office gaining a comprehensive understanding of the main correspondence systems of the Education Department from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s. It is still by no means rare for the Office to transfer nineteenth century records.

A guide to the Office's immigration holdings was published in May. *Coming South* describes records created between 1839 and 1923. Primarily designed for the family historian, the guide gives a step by step guide to tracing the arrival of an ancestor. The book, which costs \$8.95 (plus postage), will also interest those examining the subject of immigration.

Laverton Search Room users broke new records last financial year when over 40 000 record units were issued to them. Saturday openings (on the last Saturday of every month, except December and January) will continue after a successful trial period. Also to continue is the toll free number to the Laverton Search Room on weekdays and when Saturday openings occur.

The Office's List of Holdings, amongst other things, will soon be available on the Internet via VICNET, the Victorian Government information network.

Ballarat continued to be a focus of PRO activity in 1995 with the launching, at the State Offices, of the Eureka Travelling Display and the book *Eureka: from the official records*. Both were launched by Arts Minister Haddon Storey before a distinguished gathering on 23 February. The event was well reported in the local media.

The Eureka display was seen next in central Melbourne, at the Information Victoria bookshop, for a month from 26 May to 23 June. It then went to the Geelong Historical Records Centre from the end of June, and throughout July. The display will travel to other regional centres and former goldfields' towns in the Central Highlands.

The Office's Ballarat Repository and Search Room was opened to the public for the first time on 2 April. Nearly 200 people attended. The Open Day featured talks, behind-the-scenes tours and assistance with research. PRO staff were assisted by representatives of local historical and genealogical societies. The travelling exhibition of official documents 'Prelude to Eureka: the Scobie Affair' was a centrepiece.

The PRO's Head Office is located on level 3, Rialto South Tower, 525 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000. All correspondence should be addressed to

PO Box 1156, South Melbourne, Victoria, 3205. The Head Office telephone number is (03) 9628 4555, facsimile (03) 9623 2028.

Public Record Office of Western Australia

Correspondent: Tom Reynolds

On 6 June the fiftieth anniversary of the State Archives was commemorated in the Alexander Library Theatre. The evening featured (inter alia) an erudite address by the Chief Justice of Western Australia, David Malcolm entitled 'Records and the Public Interest'.

Amongst those who braved the wintry weather to attend that function were the first State Archivist Mollie Lukis and her two successors, Margaret Medcalf and Chris Coggin. As one speaker remarked, none will succeed them in that position. In late May Chris Coggin, formerly Director State Archives, was appointed Director Public Records with responsibility for the newly named Public Record Office. The latter's role is to administer the records management and archival functions of the former State Archives.

From July 1 this year the Director Battye Library and her staff have managed those private (i.e. non governmental) archives collections, that were formerly the responsibility of the State Archive. Both the Public Record Office and the Battye Library continue to operate as Directorates within the Library and Information Service of Western Australia.

During 1994 approximately one third of the State Intermediate Records Repository was upgraded to accommodate archival records. Transfers of archives from government agencies to this facility (located at Dianella, seven kilometres from the centre of Perth) commenced in October that year. Those records recently transferred include several thousand 'Cancelled Public Plans' created by the agency responsible for colonial and state land administration in Western Australia. Many of these plans (along with related records) will be used by persons or organisations with an interest in land that may be subject to claims under the Commonwealth native title legislation.

RMIT Department of Information Management and Library Studies

Correspondent: Bruce Smith

With the year almost over staff of the Department have come to grips with the amalgamation of the University of Melbourne and RMIT Departments and preparations are underway for the 1996 academic year.

It is expected that new subjects will be available in our Masters program that will reflect the fact that the Department has an archives and records stream. This will allow Graduate Diploma students to articulate their studies into the Masters program.

Throughout the year students have completed a range of projects. One that will be of interest to the profession generally is a database on Australian archival literature. This we hope will provide both students and practitioners with a useful research tool. We expect to have this available to Internet users in early 1996. For those who do not have access to the Internet a paper version will be available as well. The archives community will be advised of the database's availability through the medium of the *ASA Bulletin*.

Sydney City Council Archives

Correspondent: Mark Stevens

This report covers the eighteen month period from 1 January 1994 to 30 June 1995, during which the Council switched from a January–December to a July–June reporting year. We have resolved this change, in terms of presenting our statistics for the period in the table below, by counting a twelve month period ending on 31 December 94 (for 1994 statistics) and a twelve month period ending 30 June 95 (for 1995 statistics).

Throughout the period, Archives staff levels remained at four (three professional and one clerical officer). During 1994 and 1995 we responded to the following levels of demand.

Item	1994	1995
Lending transactions	6 147	8 159
Records accessioned or destroyed (metres)	747	802
Documentation projects	386	382
Written responses to research inquiries	369	510
Research visits	286	294
Search Room record items produced	2 763	2 660
Total records in custody at end of the year (metres)	8 151	8 098

An analysis by students from the University of NSW (four of whom are undertaking fieldwork placements with us during 1995) has revealed that our research clientele breaks down into: (a) family and other amateur historians 53 per cent; (b) professional historians doing academic or contract research 13 per cent; (c) students 2 per cent; (d) business activity, such as lawyers and architects 19 per cent; and (e) Council officers and consultants 13 per cent.

Between July and September 1994 the Archives relocated to new premises in Beaconsfield, South Sydney. Our new home is much like the former one, a warehouse without climate control, and an attached office area, in a light industrial park. Most of the nineteenth century records remain in climate-controlled vaults at the Town Hall in Sydney city, so we continue to have two repository areas and to be located remotely from Council's administration centre. The relocation was completed without major incident, possibly because we are getting to be quite expert at it by now, after two such moves within three years.

During 1994 the Archives has mounted two large exhibitions, 'The Council As Architect & Builder' in August/September 1995, and 'The Capitol, Australia's Greatest Theatre' in June/July 1995. Both were popular within the Council and outside, and together with the continuing high profile of the historical publishing project they helped ensure that resource allocators were kept aware of the Archives. In addition, Renato Perdon assisted the Urban Services Division to mount an exhibition of photographs illustrating road construction and repair since early this century.

For the first time in some years we were also able to fund some conservation work during this period, including the repair of the very large 1927 layout plan for Hyde Park by Norman Weekes (which is very different from what actually proceeded and includes, for example, use of real or supposed Aboriginal names for features in the Park). Other conservation work included transferring all flat plans still on vertical hanging racks to horizontal drawer cabinets, and purchase of improved storage boxes for rolled plans, which we plan to begin reboxing during 1996.

The long-term project to improve our CRS-based finding aids (documentations) has continued. Angela McGing completed time line charts for all agencies 1842-1992, and we are well into the documentation of functions, with activities to follow. Samantha Hughes joined the Archives staff for nine weeks in late 1994 while Angela was on leave, and completed a

finding aid for our film holdings which have been copied to videotape. She has also supplied indexes to the annual volumes of Proceedings of Council, which previously had ceased at 1978, for 1979–1987. This project will continue if and when more funds are made available.

The functional review of the Records and Archives Sections, referred to in our previous report, has reached the point where a decision has been made to re-merge the two Sections under a single manager. This will return to the situation as it was before late 1991. The new manager is yet to be appointed, and there is some discussion about titling the position Document Technology Manager.

University of New England Archives

Correspondent: Christopher C. Buckley

UNE Archives gained a new staff member when Jill Manuel arrived in 19 June. Jill has a library background which she hopes to use in an effort to uplift the profile of our program.

Some consternation was experienced recently when the hierarchy looked at the possibility of removing the records management function from the dual program of records and archives. This situation is probably déjà vu to many colleagues. Sanity may have prevailed as no changes of any discernibility have been felt as yet.

Secondary storage space is scarce and the repository is gathering accessions at a regular rate so space there is a problem. Again, nothing new in our line of endeavour.

Jeavons Baillie of the State Library of Victoria made a flying visit in recent months. Jeavons has sent on a conservation report which contains some practical and relevant comments.

The UNE Archives contribution to the popular conference activity is a role in the Exploring Family History weekend of 1–3 July organised by the University. A variety of talks, walks, tours and workshops should make for a busy time for those who like their winters cold and genealogical.