

Editorial

As Baiba Berzins wrote to Catherine Robinson, President of the Australian Society of Archivists in 2005: 'Without the efforts of Robert Sharman single-handedly keeping *Archives and Manuscripts* going for fifteen years, we probably wouldn't have the journal'. I would like to second this notion and commemorate the contribution that not only Robert but others such as Baiba have made for the benefit and prosperity of the archival profession, and applaud their invaluable contribution to the continuing success of *Archives and Manuscripts*. November 2005 marks the fiftieth anniversary of *A&M*, appropriately commemorated by Eric Ketelaar's 'Transaustralian' article, and here, a joint editorial: by primary author Robert Sharman and the introduction and conclusion written by myself (Katherine Gallen) as current Editor.

We begin here by dwelling where *Archives and Manuscripts* authors refrain to do for too long - looking back at the past - for we archivists and records professionals are future-driven and striving to tackle the concepts and capabilities that come with our technological age.

As Sharman elaborates upon below, volunteers and devotees have worked tirelessly to produce an internationally renowned journal for recordkeepers, conservators, academics and interested alike. The collage of *A&M* Editors included in this edition is a small way to say 'thanks' for their time and often thankless effort. Challenges and hiccoughs in producing a journal will always be present (yes, that page nineteen of *A&M* subscribers received in the post was an addendum to fix a printers error) but the effort and enthusiasm of the authors, 'Reviews' and 'News Notes' contributors, sub-editors and Managing Editor all make the challenge worthwhile. And now to the man that did it all 'single-handedly', I present the other half of this feature Editorial.

***Archives and Manuscripts* – Fifty years**

The first issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* appearing in November 1955, explained its genesis: The Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia (now ALIA) had been formed in 1951, and in 1955, during an LAA Conference held in Brisbane, members of this Section decided to issue a semi-annual journal to be named *Archives and Manuscripts*. It also claimed to be the successor to the *Bulletin for Australian Archivists*

issued by an informal group of archivists who had attended Dr TR Schellenberg's Seminars in Canberra in 1954.

Early issues were cyclostyled, in quarto size, and appeared at irregular intervals. Two issues (nos 2 and 3) were issued in 1956, only one in each of 1957, 1958, and 1959. The first issue was edited by Phyllis Mander Jones (of the Mitchell Library) and Allan Horton (of the Archives Division, Public Library of NSW): numbers 2 through to 6 by Jim Gibbney of the Archives Division, Commonwealth National Library. In the latter part of 1960 the writer of this article took over the Editorship: the publication came out, more or less regularly, twice a year, then four times a year. In June 1963 the journal appeared in letterpress printed form. In 1975 the Australian Society of Archivists, Inc, was formed, and the journal passed over to the new Society, with a new Editor (Andrew Lemon).

All three of the early Editors (Phyllis Mander Jones, Allan Horton and Jim Gibbney) have died: other people influential in the early history of the Archives Section such as Ian Maclean and David S Macmillan, are also not with us anymore. So how can we discover what exactly was in their minds when the journal was established? The first editorial said, 'The editorial policy is to include articles of interest to both professional and research workers among archives and manuscripts. There will also be notes of Section activities and news of members. Later issues will contain reviews wherever possible'.

The early issues are slim bulletins compared with the *Archives and Manuscripts* with which we are familiar today. Though the policy of publishing News Notes, as foreshadowed by Mander Jones and Horton in 1955, has continued, and the reviews section, a little timorously proposed in 1955, is now an extremely successful and eagerly-read section, the main features of today's *A&M*, that is learned, theoretical, philosophical articles had not appeared. Archival theory, as least in Australia, was not well developed in the 1950s. We had relied heavily on the writings of the British – some might say extremely British – archivist Sir Hilary Jenkinson and, to a lesser extent, the Dutch archivists, Muller, Feith and Fruin. In 1956 Ted Schellenberg's *Modern Archives* appeared, but the American archivist whose visit to Australia in 1954 had done so much to encourage the formation of a profession in Australia was not particularly strong on philosophy. 'Principles and techniques'

was the subtitle of his work, but his extremely practical techniques were what we learned most from him.

Yet *Archives and Manuscripts* was the medium by which some distinctively Australian elements in the development of international archival theory were expressed. Ian Maclean's article 'Trends in organising public records, with special reference to classification methods' in volume 1 number 3 (December 1956) was the first in a series of articles emanating from the head of the Archives Division of the Commonwealth National Library (as it then was) which encouraged archivists and records managers to examine the ways in which recording of transactions in the public domain enables us to recapture the essence of those events. To quote Maclean from an article written a little later 'that letters and similar documents represent administrative actions and that, in a series, what the record manager is classifying and the record staff are classing are actions rather than written pieces of information'. There were numerous and quite significant ways in which thinking developed within the Archives Division (which became separate from the Library in 1960, and became the Commonwealth Archives Office) on questions relating to the creation, classing, arrangement and description of public records: Ian Maclean made very important contributions, but not through *Archives and Manuscripts*. His two major ones have been reprinted in *Debates and Discourses: selected Australian writings on archival theory 1951-1990* (published in 1995 by the ACT Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists). They were, respectively, articles in the *American Archivist* (published in 1959) and a festschrift honouring Sir Hilary Jenkinson (published in 1962).

Australia's first major international contribution to the debate on how records in an archival repository should be controlled, arranged and described came from one of Maclean's senior officers, Peter Scott – and again was not published in *Archives and Manuscripts*. 'The record group concept: a case for abandonment' appeared in the *American Archivist* in 1966. So why was the only journal in Australia at the time specifically devoted to archives theory and practice not considered a suitable vehicle for these contributions?

As many of those who read this article already know, there was serious disagreement in Australia at the time as to whether records or archives institutions in the public sector should, or should not, be subordinate to libraries (national and state). TR Schellenberg had been invited to

Australia on the initiative of Harold White (later Sir Harold) who was head of the Commonwealth National Library – of which the Archives Division was a constituent part. Schellenberg soon formed the view that this administrative dependence of archives on libraries was disadvantageous. He hesitated to say so publicly, as White was his host. In 1956 the Commonwealth formed a Committee of Enquiry into the future of the National Library (under the chairmanship of Sir George Paton) and the Paton Committee, in 1957, recommended (among many other recommendations) that the Archives Division be established as a separate unit, directly responsible to a Minister of the Crown. Three years of turmoil in library/archive relationships, especially in Canberra, ensued, but in 1960 it was announced that recommendations of the Paton Committee would be implemented. Thus the Commonwealth Archives Office was born. The matter was, throughout the late 1950s and well into the 1960s, a sensitive one, and Ian Maclean as head of the CAO believed it unwise for his staff to be seen to be supporting an archival journal published by what was, in the ultimate, an association of librarians.

This represented an insuperable hurdle for *Archives and Manuscripts* as it was then governed: a journal published by a section of the library association, but seeking, above all, to establish the separateness of archives management from librarianship. In fact, the Editor's main aim, from 1960 for the next fifteen years, was to stimulate the development of a separate profession, and to ensure that it gained recognition in both administrative and scholastic fields. But the journal depended for its existence on decisions and finance dispensed by the General Council of LAA!

The journal managed to stay afloat, and to be published more or less regularly, for the fifteen years leading up to the formation of the Australian Society of Archivists, in 1975. The establishment of the Society was therefore of fundamental importance: it was an organisation of *archivists*, and institutions which had previously been hostile to the library connection, or even mildly suspicious of it, could no longer use it as a reason for 'staying out'. The same could be said of individuals. Even some of those employed by archives sections of State libraries had been chary of supporting a journal financed by a library organisation. There was no longer that obstacle to their joining the Society, and to

contributing to the exchange of knowledge and information about archives in the re-born *Archives and Manuscripts*.

A&M's development into a truly learned journal, attracting substantial contributions to the furtherance of archival theory and fully embracing all the challenges of recent thought, did not happen straight away. Even as recently as 1989, one writer deplored the comparative absence, in *A&M*, of articles advancing archival theory. Compared with the Canadian counterpart, *Archivaria*, he believed we Australians had provided little that was new or significant. It is my belief that, since the late 1980s, and certainly in the present century, *Archives and Manuscripts* has begun to contribute to the international exchange of ideas about the theory and philosophy of archives in a way truly representative of the wealth that is to be found in the knowledge and wisdom of our practitioners.

Robert Sharman

The collection of articles herein, to be read in conjunction with our May 2005 anniversary volume, commemorates our past and leaps forward toward the future. Questioning and pulling at the veils of our accepted notions of archival practice and thinking, the authors published in this edition of *Archives and Manuscripts* do not sit meekly on the fence of tradition. They are pioneers for original thought and proponents for new ideas and re-thinking of paradigms.

Reading Condé's work straight after Hurley's we can't help but incorporate one into the other and re-examine presented realities and stories. As Upward, Hurley, Condé and Sloggett strive for us to view an issue from alternate angles, so too will the Editorial Board strive to bring *Archives and Manuscripts* into clearer, brighter outcomes, fifty years after its inception.

Katherine Gallen



Allan Horton



Phyllis
Mander-Jones



HJ Gibbney



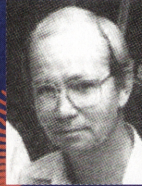
Robert Sharman



Andrew
Lemon



Baiba Berzins



Don Breech



Nancy Lutton



Averil Condren



Clive Smith



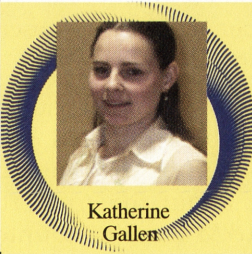
Michael
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Maggie Shapley



Katherine
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Editors 1955- 2005

Thanks go to all
other invaluable
Guest and
Managing Editors
for their support
over the years



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