



Western Archives

The Newsletter of the Western Australian Branch
of the Australian Society of Archivists
DECEMBER 2010

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ISSN 1037 - 4396

A message from the Convenor

Welcome to the Christmas edition of Western Archives.

This newsletter introduces new WA Branch committee members and focuses on a number of past events; however the Branch is also looking at new events and initiatives into the New Year. With this in mind we are very interested in your thoughts and ideas.

You may have noticed in this issue new branding for the ASA. For instance, WA's editors have incorporated the state's colours of black and gold. The ASA are looking to capitalise on Web 2.0 technologies and tools. One such tool is Ning. So go to <http://archiveslive.ning.com/> and be part of ArchivesLive!

I would like to thank the new editors of Western Archives; Leith Robinson and Sandra Buttigieg for their fantastic efforts and acknowledge the past editorial effort of Annie Medley.

Have a safe and enjoyable Festive season and we look forward to working with members in 2011.

Alan Ralph

“Future (but not weather) proof”: A report on the 2010 ASA National Conference

Contributed by Leith Robinson, a Ph D (Information Studies) student at Curtin University

Melbourne’s hosting of the national conference certainly lived up to that city’s reputation of a bleak climate, with near record rainfall and low maximum temperatures. However, everyone’s enjoyment of the diverse program was unspoilt, and a quick poll revealed their favourite talks:

- Guest speaker L.A.Larkin, author of *The Genesis Flaw*, [She forecast more data manipulation in society, and consequent battles between “black hat” and “white hat” hackers]
- “Digital recordkeeping: Are we at a tipping point?” [Finally organisations are recognizing the importance of having proper structures to preserve electronic records]
- “Learning from the past: The challenges of preserving and promoting our memory of past fires” [Local knowledge has been lost or ignored, leaving populations vulnerable]
- “The digitisation myth” [Is this an alternative to a physical search room?]
- “From Costigan to Cole – the Archives’ experience transferring, describing and preserving the digital records of Royal Commissions”

Though 3 streams were offered – Technological, Environmental and Generational Change – The technological sessions were overwhelmingly popular, with attendees often being turned away when the room filled.

Presenters used pithy phrases like “accidental archivists” to describe those for whom archiving was not a conscious career choice, “god archivists” to explain the change from archivists as former gatekeepers to today’s guides; and “pedigree resources”, meaning trusted and authentic data, such as that from the United Nations.

The conference stimulated professional discussion, challenging traditional views and provoking heated debate – one topic was who was the worst paid: School or government archivists? The main advice from the organisers was that the future-proofing of our profession requires the ignition and retention of our passion, pitching “killer facts” to our organisations about archival value, and the recognition that advocacy is a long-term commitment.

Conference proceedings will be published towards the end of 2010, and next year’s conference will be in Glenelg, South Australia, October 20-22. Diarise it now!



Panoramic view of the [Glenelg](#) foreshore in [South Australia](#), taken from mid way along the Glenelg jetty. Source= [Bilby](#)
Date=2009-02-22)

Tasks, Competencies & Salaries for Recordkeeping Professionals (TCSR)

Contributed by Alan Ralph

Recently a Western Australian sub-committee representing the ASA and the RMAA jointly developed a “Tasks, Competencies & Salaries for Recordkeeping Professionals (TCSR)” document as a supporting publication to the Statement of Knowledge for Record Keeping Professionals publication project.

The ASA membership of the committee was Alan Ralph, Roberta Cowan and Margaret Pember (until resignation), and the RMAA members were Jane Larke, Pauline Joseph, and Megan Whittle.

The TCSR is a guide for recordkeeping professionals on the tasks, competencies and salaries that can be expected at each band of their career. It identifies the theories, standards and ethics of the professional with associated practical skills, competencies and remuneration.

The PDF can now be found on the ASA’s Website on the Education Standards page <http://www.archivists.org.au/education/educational-standards> and the Word document will soon be available alongside it.

This document is extremely useful, with increased emphasis on workplace skills and development, and the information will be of value to many.

A Link to the Statement of knowledge pages is at <http://www.rmaa.com.au/docs/profdev/StatementKnowledge.cfm>.

Late breaking news: IBSA in Perth

Contributed by Leith Robinson

Further to the above article, on Friday 26 November 2010 it was Perth's turn for the nationwide forums about museum and library / information services training and workforce development, conducted by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA). A diverse table (comprising lecturers, curators, association representatives, HR managers and education officers) commented on the statistical profile of the collecting sector (for instance WA has a disproportionately high number of library assistants), discussed their recruitment difficulties and rated the importance of issues such as technological convergence.

Debate occurred over the trend for cross-training versus the need for specialists, and to what extent and for which roles should volunteers be relied upon. Other points raised were the cost of education (HECS debts are off-putting), the contrast between universities providing knowledge units and the vocational sector dealing with competency units, and that the public perception of arts and culture is limited (art is only paintings) and also stereotypical re the staff.

The remarks and solutions for professional sustainability - such as having young GLAM employees as role models for potential students - will be collated with those from all the states to help establish strategies.

More news and releases from the official project team will occur soon.

CPD Program Spreads its Wings

Contributed by Margaret Paterson, ASA Council, Education Portfolio

The ASA's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program spread its wings in September with three great workshops held in Perth. Barbara Reed of *Recordkeeping Innovation* travelled to Perth on behalf of the ASA to present two Digital Recordkeeping Workshops as well as the *Introduction to Accessioning* workshop previously showcased in Melbourne.



Barbara Reed of Recordkeeping Innovation discusses a practical activity at the CPD Workshops in Perth in early September.

The digital recordkeeping workshops are new to the CPD program and quite different from one another. *Digital Recordkeeping (for medium to larger organizations)* is a one-day workshop which outlines best practice professional approaches to digital recordkeeping. *Digital Recordkeeping (for small organisations with limited or no budget)* is a half-day practically oriented session which looks at short-term strategies to assist organisations with no real digital recordkeeping budget allocated.

Active promotion and support from the WA Branch and the WA School Archives SIG was most beneficial in the organisation of these workshops. Branch Convenor Alan Ralph facilitated with the venue at NAA in East Victoria Park and provided great 'on-the-ground' support with everything from set up and technical support, through to arranging the catering and picking up the workbooks. Many thanks must go to all involved. Feedback from the workshops was very positive and included comments such as "*Excellent presentation. Covered more than I expected –*

ASA Council is conscious that the need for CPD is widespread and ongoing and we are determined to maintain momentum with this program. Two workshops will be held on 12 October in Melbourne during the lead up to the Conference. These will be a full-day *Introduction to Archives, Archival Programs & Accessioning* workshop plus the *Digital Recordkeeping (For medium to larger organisations)* workshop which was launched in Perth recently. The pre-conference workshops have been in high demand with the Digital Recordkeeping workshop selling out almost overnight, demonstrating a real point of need.



Left: The *Introduction to Accessioning* workshop is interactive, involving exercises and case studies to reinforce key principles in KA3, the ASA's flagship 'how to' manual.

Right: CPD participants particularly enjoy the practical exercises and find the group activities and problem solving especially useful.

Plans are currently coming together for workshops in Adelaide in November and we hope to do the same in other States and Territories in the near future. We are now looking to extend the suite of workshops available so that we have more choice of topic on offer. In the meanwhile keep a good look out for our CPD workshops as we aim to offer them in your area sometime soon.

WA ASA Branch Convenor's report given at the AGM 21 July 2010:

The Branch Committee

At the last AGM of the WA Branch of the ASA the following people were elected to the Committee.

Convenor: Alan Ralph

Secretary: Dianne Harley

Contributor to Publications: Annie Medley

Program Coordinator: Roberta Cowan & Sr Irene Young

Committee Members: Mark Brogan, Pauline Joseph, Gerard Foley

No Treasurer is required for the WA Branch as all funds are now managed through the National Account by the National Treasurer.

Subsequent to the meeting the vacant committee position was filled by Sr. Irene Young.

The Committee held two formal Committee Meetings

General Meetings

Two formal committee meetings were held during the year and the committee remained in contact on various issues via email communications.

Western Archives

There were two editions of *Western Archives* produced last year. My extreme thanks Annie Medley for her excellent work in preparing this publication and to all who contributed during the year.

State Records Advisory Committee

Roberta Cowan continues in the role of deputy.

ASA Council

Margaret Paterson was elected the ASA National Council in 2009/10 and has been allocated the Education portfolio.

National Archives of Australia – Perth Consultative Forum

Several meetings of the NAA Perth Consultative Forum were held; Alan Ralph and Roberta Cowan represented the ASA. This year significant issues were discussed including the decision to close 3 NAA offices and subsequently to pursue co-location in all state offices into the future.

Conclusion

I am extremely grateful to all members of the committee for their support in tough year for the ASA WA Branch, in particular Dianne Harley as secretary and Annie Medley as Contributor to Publications.

“On the same page: Merging an Archives and Museums Service”

Contributed by Leith Robinson, a Ph D (Information Studies) student at Curtin University

At the State Library on Wednesday 21 July 2010 approximately two dozen people attended WA Museum CEO Alec Coles' speech titled “On the same page: Merging an archives and museums service”. This lecture was the prelude to the annual general meeting of the state branch of the Australian Society of Archivists, and the audience (comprising the committee, LIS professionals and members of the public greatly appreciated such an informative and entertaining session.

It was a case study of his recent work in the Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums Service. This district, in the far Northeast of England, had merged 12 institutions (like railway and shipping museums) and sites (such as Roman forts and supply depots) from the Museum group with 5 archival services (one from each of the area's 5 councils). Mr. Coles directed the project, which was achieved in April 2009, and helped garner him an OBE.

Funding for this merge was a patchwork, being from all the councils, the Culture, Media and Sport department, the Ministry of Defence, grants, shop sales and other sources.

Surprisingly, both services had shared a historical building beforehand, though they rarely interacted.

The aims of the merge included greater efficiencies, improved risk management and to help people using the collections to more easily determine their identity and enhance their self-respect. Alec described the problems encountered, such as the high degree of disruption, staff fears and egos, and the danger inherent in terminology (a merger never a takeover). He told of the lessons learned, like that whilst saving money may have been one of the aims, very little profit was [to date] realised, and that a significant incentive for co-operation is to have a tangible outcome, like a completely new building rather than re-housing or renovations.

Alec outlined what was gained from the merge, including better access, less outsourcing (for instance, archivists could advise their museum colleagues about preservation), simplified governance and the opportunity to work on special projects like “Mediatheque” [a film archive] and “Culture Shock”. To his dismay, a new T&W logo was not created!

Alec spoke of the recent revitalisation of interest in museums and archives in England, mostly due to the television series “Who do you think you are?” That, and the attraction of a new and refreshed Tyne and Wear service, resulted in a tenfold increase in visitors to 800 000 per year (By comparison, the WA museum receives 400 000 visits per year).

Alec then invited questions from the audience; however, rather than the speech content, these tended to address his plans for the WA Museum.

His enthusiasm was undeniable, albeit balanced with realism: Alec acknowledged he has a huge task ahead of him but notes he never saw the job as a caretaker role. For instance, he is aware of the decade-long storage shortfall for both museum and records holdings.

Alec supports and seeks co-operation among all our state's cultural institutions. He sadly feels that at this stage the Museum is more of a Perth Museum, with satellites in Kalgoorlie, Albany and Fremantle, and instead hopes to make it truly embody a Western Australian Museum, via sending collections to and aiding all cities and towns, particularly those in remote areas.

Alec's talk was followed by a short refreshments break, which allowed networking before the meeting proper. President Alan Ralph reported on the council's activities for the preceding year, and highlighted the contribution of Annie Medley (Publications Co-ordinator) and Dianne Harley (Secretary). Nominations before and on the night meant the 2010-2011 council will have 8 members – see Alan Ralph's column on page 1 for more details.



The reconstructed West gate at Arbeia Roman Fort in South Shields, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Photograph taken by Chris McKenna ([User:Thryduulf](#)) 4th March 2005

National Family History Week at the State Library of Western Australia

Contributed by Tricia Fairweather & Leonie Hayes, Subject Specialists: Family History, State Library of Western Australia

**Migration - Settlement - Census Records - Convicts -
Camp Followers - Community Archives - Poor Laws -
Indigenous Families - Preserving Photographs**



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Jim Gashford with his wife and baby Roy standing outside their home on Group 121 at Northcliffe 003027D

National Family History Week is an initiative of the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO) and is held during the first week of August. The aim is to promote awareness of family history and, more broadly, social history in the community. Each year the State Library celebrates the week in some way and 2010 was no exception.

This August, a varied program of tours, training and presentations was held. Presenters included staff of the Library, the State Records Office, the National Archives and the State Library Foundation as well as members of the Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc. (WAGS) and individual historians and genealogists.

The front-of-house tours showcased the Library's key resources in both the Genealogy Centre and the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History. Behind the scenes tours looked at the micrographics, digitising and conservation laboratory where you can see interesting sights, such as newspapers being washed and ironed!

There were also hands-on training sessions for small groups in the use of the ST200X digital scanners. The Library has six of these scanners which enable you to produce quality, high-resolution scans from microfilm, microfiche and slides and either print, email or save the scans to your thumb drive.

Online resources were also showcased. Bronwyn Lewis, Executive Officer of the State Library Foundation, introduced *Our Page in History*, which is a site where users can create their own page and add photographs and stories, either based around an individual family or a community. The family history Subject Specialists at the State Library presented talks on fantastic, free websites for family history as well as the Library's subscription sites such as Ancestry, the Times Digital Archive and historic British Newspapers.



www.ourpageinhistory.org

The vast array of original materials available in libraries and archives was also highlighted. Marjorie Bly, from the National Archives of Australia, focused on some of the child and youth migration records available at the National Archives; Gerard Foley gave a talk about key resources for family history at the State Records Office; and the family history Subject Specialists highlighted some hidden treasures from the Library stacks.

Steve Howell, Senior Subject Specialist: Battye and Gemma Lyon, Subject Specialist: Indigenous also gave presentations. Steve, who many people will know has worked in the Battye Library for many years and has an in-depth knowledge of Western Australian history, talked about the ill-fated group settlement scheme and Gemma, who was the 2008 recipient of the F A Sharr medal, outlined resources for Indigenous research in the Library and other agencies.

Several of the talks had a UK focus including Diane Oldman's presentation on poor laws and Bevan Carter's talk on researching convicts and criminals in England. Wendy Brown presented two sessions; one on investigating census records and the other on the lives of women associated with regimental life. All of these presenters gave a thoughtful and insightful look at the topic, giving background information on the history as well as practical advice.

There were also presentations which followed a specific family, showing the type of information which can be found; Ian Simon told the story of his ancestor, Charles Herring, who lived in both Narrogin and South Australia while Cindy Solonec presented the story of her father, Francisco Casanova-Rodriguez, who came to the Kimberley from Spain and married a Nygkina woman. Each year, the Library invites a newly qualified historian or someone with a similar qualification, to speak as part of the Library's commitment to supporting and forging links with our research community. Cindy has recently received an MA in Aboriginal & Intercultural Studies.

The week ended with a very popular session on family photographs. Presenter, Julie Martin, who formerly worked as a librarian with the Battye Library Pictorial Collection, offered practical advice on sorting and safely storing precious family photographs.

During the week, over 550 people attended the various events and we received very positive and enthusiastic feedback. All in all, it was a stimulating and enjoyable week with something new to be learned every day.

School Archives Special Interest Group (WA Branch)

Contributed by Roberta Cowan

Twenty-five school archivists, volunteers, archive students and interested administration personnel met for the final time in 2010 Nov. 1. The SiG meets once a term and enjoys the hospitality of one of the member institutions. Although this was the "Christmas Meeting" this meeting was the first meeting of the new year leading up to the annual general meeting for the branch and reporting to the School Archives Special Interest Group at the annual conference of the ASA.

The Nov. 1 meeting was held at Santa Maria College, Attadale. Lunch followed the formal meeting of the WA Branch SiG. The Santa Maria College Archivist then discussed how she and Lynda O'Meara had devised a procedure for processing the many almost identical sports trophies, banners and other sports memorabilia that can be accumulated within the school environment. The archivist gave a brief overview of how the storage has improved for the collections at the College in 2010. This has been achieved through the absolute support of the Principal of Santa Maria College, Mr. Ian Elder. The Archivist also went over information regarding the Ning site smallozcollections.ning.com. You can see many images from the visit at smallozcollections.ning.com.

ASA Visit to:

**Freida
French,**
School
Archivist



A visit to the Christ Church Grammar School was organised by the ASA WA Committee on 17 November 2010. The visit provided an opportunity to view the archive facilities and hear from the School Archivist, **Freida French** on how the Archives operates within the School and the kind of services offered to the students, staff and wider school community.



Attendees admired the *Centenary Exhibition 100 Years of Light and Learning* at the Old Boys Archives & Gallery. It was interesting to learn about Freida's varied roles as the school archivist, oral historian and researcher.



Sarah Cheung, Carl Gerdes, Pauline Joseph, Ann, Julia Wallis & Freida French



By: Pauline Joseph, ASA, WA Committee Member

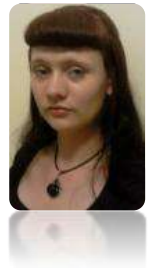
New Committee Members:

Sandra Buttigieg:

I am currently working at the Fire & Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of WA as Records Coordinator, where my duties mostly consist of processing Freedom of Information (FOI) Applications, TRIM Administration, and the implementation of a new Business Classification Scheme.

I am in my final year of study at Curtin University working towards a Bachelor of Arts (Librarianship & Corporate Information Management) with a minor in Legal Studies.

The benefit of this degree which focuses on 3 complementary professions is that I am able to approach my work with the combined perspective of a Records Manager, Corporate Librarian and/or Archivist as appropriate.



Karen Vann:

I am a student at Curtin University working towards a Master of information Management. I am also working part time in a small religious archive, where a significant part of my role as archivist is attending to enquiries from and about ex-residents of child care institutions.

I am currently on a records management practicum placement at the Department of Housing which happens to have the Perth Girls Orphanage (founded in 1868) as part of its premises. I have been told that it is haunted by the ghost of a nine year old girl.

Previously I have been an art and mathematics teacher; then after completing a Graduate Diploma of Information Science I spent some years as a teacher-librarian and special librarian. Most recently I have owned and operated a small art, photography and picture framing business, which is where my interest in the conservation of paper, art and photography emerged.

I am wondering now how I might be able to undertake a Master of Arts in Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne in the not too distant future.

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NEW!

**TELL US WHAT YOU
WANT IN 2011**

The fresh Branch Council is eager
to plan exciting and educational
events in 2011:

Tell us what you'd like to do, learn,
attend and read about!

Please email suggestions to
ltkrobinson@bigpond.com