

UMA



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The Future for the University of Melbourne Archives and Special Collections

AS THIS third edition of the UMA Bulletin goes to press the University of Melbourne Archives is in the midst of a period of significant change. This commenced late in 1997 with the planning and development of specifications for a new repository for the storage of our archival collections. Subsequent changes have included the retirement on 3 July 1998 of Dr. Cecily Close, Acting University Archivist, and the arrival of Michael Piggott as the new University Archivist from 14 September.

New University Archivist

The position in which Michael commenced in September is newly created within the structure of the University of Melbourne Library. It blends the responsibilities of University Archivist and head of Special Collections, a combination for which he is very well qualified. Michael commenced training as a librarian at the National Library of Australia in 1971 and gained a Diploma of Librarianship at Canberra College of

Advanced Education in 1972. Over the following six years he accumulated experience in the National Library as an ABN Cataloguer and Manuscripts Librarian before becoming curator of written records at the Australian War Memorial. In 1988 Michael joined the Australian Archives having completed a Master of Archives Administration at the University of NSW. Since then he has occupied senior positions as a program director at the National Archives of Australia.

Michael is a greatly respected member of the Australian Society of Archivists which awarded him its Laureate in 1997. He has published extensively nationally and internationally as well as editing *Archives and Manuscripts* and other professional literature. He has written on the history of archiving and the recordkeeping professions within Australia, and has been involved in professional archival and education issues for many years. His presence at the University of Melbourne will cement our relationships with other members of the professional community both on campus and more *Continued page 2*

The University of Melbourne Archives

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widely, and enable us to benefit from their experience in providing our own service to researchers and depositors.

New Repository and Access Arrangements

Challenges which currently face the Archives and Special Collections include the relocation of the UMA's entire 12 kilometres of University, business, trade union and related records, objects, art works, films, videos and photographs, as well as many of the literary archives held in Special Collections, to a newly refurbished repository between late November and Christmas 1998. The repository contains all of the features appropriate to its function of protecting and preserving valuable historical records, such as a fire detection system, temperature and humidity control, and enamel-coated shelving. Other features include meeting rooms, a separate processing area, an industrial hoist to the second floor storage area, special storage for framed photographs and art works and access for the disabled.

Following the move, the reference service of the UMA was temporarily provided at the Barry Street, Carlton premises, but has now moved to the Special Collections reading room in the

Baillieu Library. The implication of having a reference service on campus and a remote repository is that, for the first time in its history, the UMA will operate in the same way as the Manuscript Division of the State Library of Victoria, or the Search Rooms of the Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. Collections for reference will need to be ordered by researchers in advance and will be provided at set times each day. The fine tuning for this service is being finalised and while high quality assistance will continue to be provided for researchers, there will also be changes.

One of the challenges for Archives staff has always been to balance the time taken in direct reference service to researchers and time spent processing records to facilitate the control and use of collections. One clear benefit of separation of the reference service from the other work in our new home will be the time that will be available to increase the level of processing of collections, and hence an increase in our capacity to serve researchers in the longer term. ❖

Suzanne Fairbanks
Deputy University Archivist



Left: overcrowding is one of the good reasons for moving the Archives collections – conditions at University Square had become very crowded.

Below left & right: construction of 15 kilometres of shelving at the new Archives Repository in Dawson Street, Brunswick. While funds for two floors of compactus were not available, the six metre high fixed shelving has provided considerable capacity for collection growth as well as allowing good air ventilation.



Archives of the Australian Constitutional Convention 1973-1985

by Heather McRae
former Assistant Archivist
University of Melbourne Archives

THE University of Melbourne's Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies (CCCS) is the repository for a collection of archives of the Australian Constitutional Convention which met between 1973 and 1985. First proposed in the Victorian Parliament, the Convention gained bipartisan support from governments across Australia, presenting an opportunity for wide-ranging debate and review of the Constitution.

The six plenary sessions of the Convention were attended by delegations from Commonwealth, State and Territory parliaments, local government representatives, and observers from the general public. Between these meetings, a changing array of committees focused on issues and sections of the Constitution referred to them by the Convention. They were supported by a small Secretariat, headed by Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Constitutional Convention, the late John Finemore, QC (also Chief Parliamentary Counsel of Victoria until his retirement in 1984). John Finemore guided the Convention through a turbulent period of Australian political history, fostering a spirit of goodwill which participants remember to this day.

The ACC passed resolutions on numerous constitutional matters, in some cases with lasting impact on the practices of governments and courts in Australia. Three of only eight successful referendums to amend the Constitution since federation were

held in 1977, following endorsement of the proposals by the Convention.

The Australian Constitutional Convention archives collection owes much to John Finemore, who not only kept the records of Convention and committee proceedings safely, but amassed a wealth of related contemporary and historical documents, publications and research material. This collection moved with the Secretariat from office to office – Mr Finemore's garage providing storage for the overflow.

At its final plenary session in 1985, the Convention established the Australian Constitutional Convention Council. In 1989 the Convention Council Secretariat, with John Finemore its Honorary Executive

Director, moved to the building housing the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies in Barry Street, Carlton. In 1994, following the winding up of the Council's operations, the Centre was given custody of the records of the Australian Constitutional Convention (including those of the Convention Council) on the understanding that they would be archived for the benefit of researchers. The University of Melbourne provided funds so that this could be undertaken.

These records are now available for consultation at the Centre. The collection contains over 500 files, together with printed and manuscript volumes, photographs, cassettes, videotapes and memorabilia. It includes minutes, correspondence, research papers, reports and other records produced by or for the Australian Constitutional Council and its committees, and additional material collected to assist the Convention's work.

The Centre has recently published a guide to this collection, with the support of the Victorian Law Foundation. Prepared by archivist Heather McRae and project manager Anne Mullins, the guide comprises an historical introduction by Professor Cheryl Saunders, and comprehensive lists of the items in the collection, with contextual information. Also included are lists of the delegates and representatives who attended each plenary session, and the text of resolutions passed by the ACC.

The guide was launched on 27 August by Sir Rupert Hamer, who

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Former chief executive officer of the Convention, John Finemore (right) and archivist Heather McRae in 1995. (Photo: courtesy of the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies).

Sir Phillip Reginald Lynch

by Jan Hancock, Reader, Department of History
Australian National University

PHILLIP Lynch was born in Melbourne in 1933. The son of a skilled tradesman, he attended Xavier College and then the University of Melbourne where he obtained a BA and a Dip. Ed. He learnt some of his political skills at university where, in turn, he became secretary, treasurer and president of NUAUS, attended as the Australian representative the African-Asian Students Conference in Indonesia in 1956, and led campaigns against the white Australia policy. Having joined the Young Liberals, he became their Victorian state president in 1955 to 1956. Ambitious and driven, Lynch went into business, joined the JAYCEES, was elected their Melbourne vice-president in 1962 and president in 1963 and became national president in 1966. By then, he was managing director of Manpower (Australia) Pty Ltd, a company with 400 offices on five continents. Later, he was to become a fellow of the Institute of Directors and an associate of the Australian Institute of Management.

Lynch won pre-selection for the Liberal-held seat of Flinders and entered federal parliament in the "Vietnam" election of 1966. Gorton made him Minister for the Army in early 1968 and, despite some early blunders and complications, he climbed within the ministry to become McMahon's Minister for Immigration in 1971 to 1972. He was a surprise choice as Deputy Leader to Billie Snedden following the coalition's defeat in the 1972 election and played a principal role in the drastic revision

of the party platform in 1974. After supporting Snedden in the first challenge to his leadership at the end of that year, Lynch appeared to side with Fraser in early 1975 and remained the deputy when Fraser assumed the leadership in March. Lynch subsequently led the parliamentary assault on the Whitlam government over the "loans affair" and became Treasurer in the new Fraser government after the coal-



tion's massive win in the December 1975 elections. Regarded as the leading "dry" in Cabinet, Lynch failed to persuade his colleagues to implement the drastic cuts he wanted in government expenditure. Just after Fraser called an early election for November 1977, Lynch was accused of profiting from land speculation on the Mornington Peninsula and of receiving special consideration in a property deal in Queensland. Stricken with kidney stones, and despite some sterling defensive efforts of his staff and legal advisers, Lynch was effectively forced by Fraser to stand aside from the ministry. Eventually, he was cleared of any

wrongdoing and a reluctant and suspicious Fraser took him back into Cabinet as Minister for Industry and Commerce.

Although he was opposed by James Killen in 1978 and by Andrew Peacock in 1980, Lynch remained Fraser's loyal Deputy until another bout of ill health forced him out of politics in October 1982. Knighted in 1979, Lynch returned to business, and was appointed to the board of the Reserve Bank, but bowel cancer took him to an early death at the age of 50 in June 1984.

Lynch's papers, held in 109 boxes at the University of Melbourne Archives, constitute an invaluable resource for historians and political scientists. Apart from voluminous material relating to policy development within the Liberal Party, and to Lynch's own approach to tariff protection, deregulation and small government, the papers offer insights into the personalities and processes of politics and into the activities of a renowned political "fixer". Although he was a Catholic in an overwhelmingly Protestant party, Lynch was widely admired for his tenacity, capacity for work, loyalty, and ability to hose down crises and to reconcile warring individuals and factions. The papers show him at work, for example, in 1974 and 1975 patching up relations between the Country Party and the Victorian Liberals. There is material, too, highlighting the extensive contacts between a senior Liberal and leading members of the business community and with right-wing economists, as

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The Archive of W. (Bill) E. James

designer and maker of astronomical optics

Based on text provided by Mrs. Sue James and
Emeritus Professor H. C. Bolton

THIS archive in the UMA has been assembled from material in the optical workshop and the home of the late Bill James¹.

James took some subjects at the University of Melbourne but did not graduate. Having a good singing voice and acting ability he took lessons and toured with J. C. Williamson in Australian and New Zealand. He began making lenses as an amateur and made telescopes for himself. It was in New Zealand that he was encouraged by a DSIR Laboratory to take his lens-making seriously and in 1961 he went to the UK to work in the optical workshops of FJ Hargreaves, the maker of telescopes and their optical components for astronomical observations. Whilst in the UK, James moved to the Physics Department, Imperial College, London and worked on the camera for the National Bubble Chamber Project which displayed high energy particles in cosmic rays. He was sent to India under the Colombo Plan to set up the optical workshop at the Indian Institute of Technology for postgraduate students and to train technicians in optical technology techniques.

Returning to Australia in 1965 he worked as an optical technician in the Physics Department, University of Tasmania where he made its sixteen inch telescope. In 1968 he started his own company, James Optics, in

Hartwell, Melbourne, later moving it to Hawthorn. He received much encouragement from Lloyd Rees, the Chief of the CSIRO Division of Chemical Physics and from other members of the CSIRO staff. One of his first tasks was to make the one metre telescope for the University of Tasmania.

A full list of the significant optical equipment that he made is given in the



A photograph in the Bill James archive – polishing a square component on a Teflon polisher with the special holder.

article by Bolton & Coates. His first major work to gain him an international reputation was the Prime Focus Corrector Lenses for the Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) at Siding Springs, NSW. This gave a field of view of one degree. The second work for which Bill James will be widely remembered consists of three reflectors each made of fourteen cube corner

prisms and designed for an Optus AUSSAT B satellite.

The James collection comprises autobiographical papers, correspondence and other papers documenting his family history, project files, photographs, unpublished works and files of correspondence on his professional activities. James rarely threw away any manuscripts and his creative process can be followed in great detail. Many of the manuscripts were handwritten and for most of his creative life he was working alone so that typescripts and their manual corrections can be recognised as his. In many cases, such as in preparation of a public lecture or the writing of a new article for publication, he wrote several drafts and these are present in his archives, allowing the creative process to be followed in detail.

The archive contains many letters to and from individuals and institutions about equipment. Copies of the letters with Hargreaves are in his archive; the originals are in the Basser Library, Academy of Science, Canberra. It also has copies of the published articles by Bill James and of several unpublished discussions of technical problems. He was specially interested in the testing of his optical equipment under construction.

The research value of the collection is very high. For instance the range of correspondence covers discussions of the instruments James made and also many points about other instruments. He made unsuccessful tenders to make other instruments and these tenders are also included, giving his comments on the structure of the instruments. ❖

1. A full account of James' life and work has been published by H. C. Bolton and D. W. Coates in *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia*, Vol. 113, 1996, pp. 258-267.