

U M M A



No. 7, DECEMBER 2000

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## Good News and Bad News

**B**y any reasonable measure, the Archives has had a good 12 months. We began the year emerging from a period of dislocation and organisational change – the move to a new repository, the opening of a new access point on campus, and an amalgamation with Special Collections. We end it now having established a strong working relationship with a second sister unit, the Grainger Museum and (consequent on the disappearance of the Library as an administrative entity) located in a new organisational structure called the Information Resources Access Department. The good news in all this concerns survival (all the Library's previous divisions have been broken up), consolidation, and positioning within a department with a clear focus on those enablers and pre-conditions of research, namely resource preservation and online discovery.

There have also been a half dozen or more other positive developments:

- the award of a \$100,000 Australian Research Council grant to lead the development of a national database and

web interface to details of trade unions and their records;

- Rio Tinto's agreement to upgrade its long standing support for the Archives from a yearly to triennium basis and at a higher level of responsibility and remuneration;
- a series of special staffing and funding allocations from the Library (e.g. for digitisation of photographs starting with the Ellis collection; for a comprehensive conservation survey of the physical state of the collections; and for increased administrative support for the Special Collections and Archives joint operation at the Baillieu Library;
- the establishment of a series of collection management policies and procedures;
- several major acquisitions including 120 collections of the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, company dossiers from J.B. Were, further Bright family records and defunct companies series from the Public Record Office, Victoria.

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## The University of Melbourne Archives

The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010, Australia  
Opening Hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, 9.00 am–5.00 pm; Wed 9.00 am–9.45 pm  
Summer Opening Hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9.00 am–5.00 pm; Wed 9.00 am–8.45 pm  
Phone: (03) 8344 6848  
Fax: (03) 9347 8627  
Email: [archives@archives.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:archives@archives.unimelb.edu.au)  
Web site: <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/archgen.html>

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*from page 1* Nevertheless, there is enormous scope for improvement and we have a very ambitious list of goals for the coming year to better fund, preserve, document and promote the collections. We are surviving and flourishing.

Elsewhere, the picture is not so rosy. Progressively during the year increasingly gloomy reports were received from the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University. As most readers would know, it is Australia's largest collection of non-government archives and like UMA has concentrated on business and trade union archives. Over the past ten to fifteen years its staffing of eight has been gradually reduced, and two years ago it was effectively put on notice. It was given an external funding target, forced to charge non-ANU researchers and reduce services. Now has come the news of staff redundancies which means it will have only two staff, a level at which it can barely operate effectively. Senators, researcher bodies, the Friends of the NBAC and eminent scholars such as Professors Geoffrey Blainey and

Stuart Macintyre have protested, to no avail.

The fate of the Noel Butlin has implications critical to our own future role. First, because our two organisations' work is so interconnected: we have collected in a coordinated and complementary fashion; we have developed a common retention and disposal schedule for union records and run joint workshops for trade union staff. We are the two leading collections of business and trade union archives nationally and any weakening of one inevitably affects the other. Second, it sends a very clear reminder that archives have no guaranteed future (as if we ever doubted this). Every possible effort must be made to keep usage rates high, the case for archives before resource allocators and the public, and somehow, the external funding sources flowing. Our thoughts go out to colleagues at the Noel Butlin, and given the time of year, we silently hope for a miracle. ❖

Michael Piggott  
University Archivist

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### **Eminent Historians Defend the Noel Butlin Archives Centre**

*(The following is based on a press release issued by the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre on 4 October.)*

**T**he treasure house of Australian business and labour archives at the Australian National University has no stable future in the new millennium. The Australian National University's executive proposes to fund the Noel Butlin Archives Centre for only two more years (2001 and 2002). Any further funding is to be determined by review.

Stuart Macintyre, Ernest Scott Professor of History at the University of Melbourne gave his support to the archives centre by stating that, "the Noel Butlin Archives are one of this country's great historical treasures. They consist of the records of major businesses and trade unions reaching back well into the 19th century. Future generations would find it hard to comprehend that such a vital resource should be squandered."

Professor Macintyre pointed out that in the Butlin Archives can be found the documentary records of the pastoral industry, mining, shipping, manufacturing and other enterprises around which the Australian economy grew. Also here are the records of the shearers' union, the miners, the waterside workers and also of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, as well as those of the National Farmers Federation. Together these records are Australia's most important source for the history of enterprise and working life.

Professor Macintyre said, "business, professional and union representatives are highly concerned by the irresponsibility of a public institution. It is unthinkable that

the Research School, which receives block funding from the Commonwealth for its national research role, should throw off its obligations and endanger such a crucial national asset."

In Melbourne historian Geoffrey Blainey commented, "The Noel Butlin Archives are a major source for those studying Australia's history. Nobody can investigate the history of Australian businesses and trade unions without using these archives. So much of the nation's economic and social history is preserved here. It would be a tragedy if this outstanding collection continues to receive a low priority from the Australian National University, its present owners." ❖



*Professor Stuart Macintyre*

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# ARC Supports Access to Trade Union Archives

by Michael Piggott  
University Archivist

Earlier this month a group of archivists, led by the University of Melbourne Archives and the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, was awarded \$100,000 (90% of the figure sought) under the Australian Research Council's Research Infrastructure (Equipment and Facilities) Program to support a project to develop the Australian Trade Union Heritage Resources Gateway (ATUHRG).

The project grew from discussions at the 1999 National Scholarly Communications Forum, the first of 10 forums to address issues relating to archives in the national research infrastructure. The forum strongly supported funded research that would undertake analysis of all areas of Australian life to enable the development of cooperative documentation strategies by archival institutions, and identified UMA as the appropriate initiator. ATUHRG is part of the response to that challenge. It was the partners' clear assessment that existing information infrastructure supporting trade union and related studies is inefficient and incomplete.

The Chief Investigator administering the grant is the University Archivist, University of Melbourne Archives (UMA). Project partners are Dr Sigrid McCausland (the ANU Archivist and, until recent changes, also responsible for the Noel Butlin Archives Centre), Gavan McCarthy (President, Australian Society of Archivists and Director, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre based within our History and Philosophy of Science program), Associate Professor Sue McKemmish (Monash University and the incoming head of the School of Information Management and Systems), and Michael Organ (University Archivist, University of Wollongong). Each has agreed to make substantial cash and/or in kind support to the project.

The project aims are:

- to remedy a significant gap in the scholarly infrastructure relating to trade union and related studies such as economic and social history, workplace relations, industrial conflict and resolution, conciliation and arbitration, and community identity; and

- to test emerging Australian and international archival metadata standards for description, resource discovery and publication on the Web.

The project will result in:

- the creation of a database carrying structured data about Australia's trade unions past and present, their basic historical details and their archival records, using a Microsoft Access platform and a Sun server set up and maintained by the Information Division;
- a 'front-end' gateway to this database providing an on-line browse and search facility via the World Wide Web, using Online Heritage Resource Manager, a system developed for this specific kind of need by the above mentioned Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre;
- addition to the database of information about trade unions, their basic historical details and their archival records, gathered principally in two ways:
  - by converting information from *Parties to the Award: a guide to the pedigrees and archival resources of federally registered trade unions, employer associations and their peak councils in Australia, 1904-1994* (published by the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, 1994) and expanded from administrative histories of trade unions held in the catalogues, accessions registers and descriptive lists held by the project partners, and
  - gathered more systematically by research archivists undertaking field research with state and regional trades hall councils, industrial registries and other libraries and archives which have trade unions' archival records.

Each partner represents a different feature of the project solution. Approximately 80 percent of trade union archival records in Australia have been collected by the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University and by the University of Melbourne Archives. (This ratio of course explains these two institutions' central involvement in this project.) The remainder is scattered between 20-30 other university archives and state libraries and state archives, the

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# Working within the University Community

by Elizabeth Agostino  
Administrative Officer  
University of Melbourne Archives

Contrary to sometimes popular perception and depiction, an archive does not exist in a vacuum. This assertion is particularly true of an archive within an academic community whose stated commitment is research support and provision of quality access, teaching and learning. Within this environment the pressure to continually evolve and improve is great, however compliance often entails additional expenditure and strain on resources. As these are neither desirable nor even feasible options, the alternative is to find ways to facilitate this growth outside the confines and constraints of the immediate environment. It is obvious then that for the University of Melbourne Archives at least the development and maintenance of a cooperative network of contacts, consultants, partnerships and service providers within the University is of great importance.

In order to target the goal of customer satisfaction, a range of services should be offered. Just as the needs and interests of our researchers vary greatly, so the associated services need to be able to support requests across our entire collection, irrespective of format or location. As an example, if we aim to facilitate access to and use of our collection then the related services we provide must be able to accommodate paper-based records, prints, photographs, audio-visual material, maps, artworks and objects, all of which are represented within our holdings.

When dealing with the reference inquiries which constitute a significant proportion of daily work, shared information between related resources/service areas within (and sometimes outside) the University, even as fundamental as 'what type of records/archives exist where', can result in greater success for the researcher.

With that said, it is also important to note that whilst provision of quality customer service is viewed as a key indicator of

our success, we are prepared to meet the needs of our customers only if they do not compromise our own requirements based on preservation, conservation, confidentiality and resource management issues. It is for this reason that we are driven to establish and maintain working relationships with other specialist bodies within the University that are able to alleviate our time, knowledge and equipment restraints, enrich us with their experience and expertise and, most importantly, are able to ensure the security and safety of any part of our precious collection.

Here are some of the service providers and contacts with which the Archives has built effective working relationships.



*Bermel Copy Centre Staff*

## Copy Service

The Copy Service is an internal service located within the Library. Along with the myriad other photocopying and scanning jobs handled by Copy Services for internal customers, they also handle daily copying requests from the Archives and Special Collections Reading Room. Copy Services staff are conscious of the delicate condition of some of our collections and treat the material accord-

ingly yet with access to specialised equipment are able to process otherwise impractical requests. Copy Services staff are also in a position to detail any problem areas they may encounter when processing requests, which may be due perhaps to the physical condition of the material or the ambiguity of how the request is delivered. Such feedback is welcome and assists in the improvement of several of our administrative and collection work processes.

## Media Production

By far the most utilised service by Archives outside the Library Copy Service is Media Production, also now one of our partners in the new Information Division. Media Production regularly

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provide high quality photographic and digital imaging work for our patrons as well as assisting with our own preservation and promotion jobs. Media Production staff provide advice on storage and image filing systems and recently have collaborated with the Archives on a project that will see several of our photograph collections digitised and available for browsing and ordering via the Internet.

<<http://www.meu.unimelb.edu.au/>>

## General Services Unit

The Archives relies on the staff of the Division's GSU to provide a reliable and careful courier service each morning between the Brunswick Repository and the Reading Room in the Baillieu Library. The GSU staff are also sometimes called on to assist in the transportation of particularly cumbersome or fragile items to various places on campus.

## Map Section

The impressive architectural collections of the Archives are very popular and more often than not a researcher will require a copy of a particular plan or drawing for reproduction or for personal use. As many of our drawings are pre-1900s and greater than A0 size, photocopying on a standard copier is not possible, as this requires the plans to be physically manipulated far more than is desirable. In the cases where the plans are sturdy enough to be copied with a large format copier we transport them to the Map Section where we are assisted with protective plan covers and instructions on how to use the plan printer appropriately. Without access to this service we would have no alternative but to refuse copying requests or else charge much higher rates to cover the cost of transporting the plans to external service providers.



*Rebecca and Lee at work in Media Production*

## Records Services

### Micrographics

The micrographics service within Records Services provides the University with in-house microfilming and production of archival quality film. Any material that has deteriorated or is too fragile to use or transport or even to photocopy or scan, is entrusted to Micrographics to film. With preservation filming, access to material is maintained without compromising the safety of fragile originals. We hope that in the future access to certain collections of worldwide significance will be facilitated by

having microfilm copies available for purchase or loan by overseas researchers or institutions.

### Central Records

Central Records, one of the four service areas within Records Services, stores, maintains and retrieves the University's administrative and policy files. For example, Central Records holds the committee papers of the Academic Board, the Committee of Convocation, the Human Research Ethics Committee, the Committee on Staff Salaries and many others.

There is often a large amount of overlap in the research inquiries received by the Archives and Central Records and it is helpful to have an understanding of what sorts of information can be obtained from each body.

<<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/unisec/records.htm>>

## Student Administration

<<http://www.studentadmin.unimelb.edu.au/>>

Student Administration and the Archives often receive the same type of written inquiries and calls for information. Depending on the period and type of information in question, we will sometimes work together to assist a researcher. The Archives and Student Administration have also worked together to develop policies and procedures that relate to accessing information contained in student records.

## Development Office

The Development Office, part of the University's new Development Division, incorporates the former Alumni Relations Unit and as such, part of this area's responsibility is to maintain the database

of graduates, friends and benefactors of the University. Although governed by the same principles of confidentiality, the Development Office can provide useful information for genealogical inquiries through their contact brokering service.

The Archives has contributed information and images etc. to several publications produced by the Development Office and more recently the Archives has been involved with their preparations for the University's 150th anniversary celebrations.

<<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/development/development.html>>

## Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre

Primarily, the IPACC provides care and conservation for the collections of cultural material belonging to the University. The Archives collection being one of these, any material from our collection which is in poor condition

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from page 5 is taken to the IPACC for expert care and attention. Additionally, the IPACC has been involved in educating Archives staff about conservation and preservation through workshops or simply by offering advice on a case-by-case basis. The input of the IPACC, especially in terms of advice on the transportation and housing of materials, makes access to somewhat fragile and otherwise inaccessible material possible.  
<[www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/site/conserv.html](http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/site/conserv.html)>

## Bermel Copy Centre

As a more affordable option to photography, colour photocopying is often required, particularly for inclusion in higher degree work. Requests for colour photocopies are increasingly popular and to accommodate these requests our material is entrusted to the staff at the Bermel copy centre. Bermel have

assisted with specialised Archives copying jobs for a number of years now and understand our need both for security and careful handling of material.

Other areas/units we cooperate with include:

- **Austehc:** <<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/>>
- **History of the University Unit**  
<<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/infoserv/university/uni.html>>
- **Department of History**  
<<http://www.history.unimelb.edu.au/>>

This list is by no means exhaustive and intended only to provide an indication of the cross-section of services, work groups and study areas on which we rely and with which we interact to make our collection as accessible and useful as possible. ❖

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## Staff News

Undoubtedly the lead item is news from the maternity ward. Sue Fairbanks, Deputy University Archivist, gave birth on Tuesday morning 5th December to twin girls, Caitlin and Emily. All three are well. The twins were briefly in humidicribs and are adding rapidly to their arrival weights of 5.9lbs and 4.9lbs. We wish them and the proud parents Sue and John all the best for the future. Sue will probably return to duty, at the earliest, late next year.

A number of Sue's projects have been very capably taken up by Fay Anderson, a part-time contract project archivist who earlier this year joined the Archives from the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre. She had previously worked for us, most recently assisting with a project to complete our accessions database. Fay has also been lecturing at the Australian Centre and is completing her doctoral thesis on the historian Professor Max Crawford. Her skills in juggling projects and priorities are already proving invaluable.



The CRA/Rio Tinto archivist, Leigh Swancott, has resigned after nearly ten years service in the Archives. Rio Tinto itself was a heavy user of the collections and its Company Secretary noted that Leigh's knowledge would 'be greatly missed'. We wish Leigh well for the future, including his plans to resume postgraduate research within the Department of History and Philosophy of Science. Liz Agostino, whose job title of 'Administrative Officer' barely begins to accurately describe her many critical service and coordinating roles in the Archives, also continues to pursue additional studies. She has just completed her

Graduate Diploma of Psychology and a string of high distinctions have resulted in an offer to enrol for post graduate studies.



Dr Mark  
Richmond and  
Michael Piggott  
at the presenta-  
tion of Mark's 25  
year service  
medallion.



Recently Dr Mark Richmond was presented with his 25 year service medallion. It was a belated event restricted to Archives staff: Mark had successfully avoided the 'fuss' such a milestone warrants for over two years! In fact his first association with the Archives dates back to the late 1950s when Frank Strahan mentioned to him his hopes for the Archives and its future staffing. Since Mark officially joined us in July 1973 he has developed an unrivalled knowledge of the collections and has patiently and quietly shared it with a generation of researchers. For those who saw *Shooting the Past* on ABC TV in October, Mark is our Oswald. Mark has received innumerable 'Mentioned-in-Forewords', and at the recent launch at the Department of History of *A Chequered Past: pieces of Melbourne University*, was especially singled out for thanks by a representative of the 'Millennium Scholars', the latest crop of the University of Melbourne's budding historians. ❖

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# Putting the HER Back Into Australia's History

by Elle Morrell, AWAP Project Worker  
and Patricia ni Jvor, NFAW Board Member and AWAP Project Coordinator

The National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), at its March 2000 Board meeting, established a national project to support the preservation of women's papers. This followed an approach by well known Melbourne identity, Mary Owen, to have her papers and those of the Working Women's Centre Melbourne and some WEL Victoria material archived.

What is now known as the Australian Women's Archives Project (AWAP) marks an exciting development for the Australian women's movement. Too often the hard work and recognition of Australian women's individual and collective achievements remain unrecognised. By establishing the project, and a national strategy for the preservation of women's papers, the NFAW is seeking to contribute to the collective history, expertise and knowledge of Australian women.

The inclusive nature of this project allows for the involvement of all women in order to reflect the diversity of experience and traditions that represent the women's movement. This project does not promote a special physical archive nor is it the custodian of records. Rather the AWAP functions as a resource which assists women and their organisations to protect, preserve and promote the records and history of Australian women through existing archival organisations.

## National Strategy of the Project

The national strategy is to protect and make accessible Australian women's history. The strategy has four distinct components:

- an internet-based Australian Women's Archives Register and searchable database of the location and content of women's papers;
- an Australian Women's Archives Fund to resource the ongoing preservation of women's papers and materials;
- Australian Women's Archives Local Joint Committees, formed around the need to archive individual women's (or an organisation's) papers; partners in these Joint Committees include state women's trusts, libraries and archives which assist the NFAW to:
  - progress the efforts of groups and individuals to archive, index and maintain Australian women's papers; and

- advise the NFAW on the distribution of monies in the Australian Women's Archives Fund;
- an Australian Women's Archives reference group of distinguished Australians to advise the project and to ensure the development of consistent and integrated systems for women's archives.

## Australian Women's Archives Fund

Donations to the NFAW, indicating a preference for the donation to be used for the archiving of Australian women's papers, are tax deductible. Donations so far have enabled the NFAW to support the successful archiving of Mary Owen's papers at the State Library of Victoria, to assist members of WEL Victoria in archiving their papers at the University of Melbourne Archives, and to employ a part-time project officer from July 2000 to establish standards, to research and compile entries for our online project and to seek out contributions to the Register.

## Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre

The Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (Austehc) of the History and Philosophy of Science Department at the University of Melbourne has offered the NFAW free licence use of their *Online Heritage Resource Manager* software and is assisting by incubating the project. Austehc's experience developing the *Bright Sparcs* web site of Australian scientists (<<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs>>) offers a model for the AWAP Register.

The advantage of the website Register is that it gives open access to Australian women's histories and stories as well as identifying where archival holdings are located. Acting as a clearing house, this project tool aims to link existing catalogues of women's papers in national, state and university libraries as well as the records of smaller individuals and organisations — a powerful tool indeed.

The Register provides brief biographical details of women, their organisations and events that have contributed to the diverse and vibrant women's movement of Australia. This is still very much a work in progress, with 35 current registrations. However, we welcome any suggestions for the inclusion in this register of either archival collections, publications and/or individuals and their



*Equal pay float, 1960s, Communist Party of Australia. (University of Melbourne Archives Photograph Collection.)*

organisations.

Contact Elle Morrell either by email <elle@austehc.unimelb.edu.au>, or by phone (03 8344 9286) to obtain a copy of the registration form in order for your records and suggestions to be included in this register. The registration form will also be up on the Web in the near future.

### **University of Melbourne Archives**

The AWAP also is working collaboratively with the University of Melbourne Archives and intends to form a joint committee with them in the near future to support the preservation of women's papers held by the University. In this way, the UMA's focus on Australian women can be supported by the NFAW's work and the AWAP will benefit greatly from the knowledge held in the UMA.

### **Collaboration with Other Organisations**

The Victorian Women's Trust is an active partner with the NFAW in Victoria and has endorsed the national strategy. We anticipate similar partnerships in other states as the project expands.

### **How You Can Contribute**

In order for this work to progress, women are encouraged to register their records with the AWAP now:

- look for those boxes of papers, photos and posters that capture the organisations you worked with in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s;
- register a woman that you have worked with throughout the years who serves as an inspiration to yourself and others for her contribution to the second wave of the women's movement; care is being taken to respect individual privacy and consent will be sought where possible before entries are registered on the Web;
- take the time to consider any libraries or documents that you have used over the years that you feel should be more widely promoted for general public use.

Representatives of the NFAW are available to speak to organisations about the project. We encourage all women to consider how they can contribute to this project; whether it is registering your records, volunteering some time for the project or donating to the Australian Women's Archive fund; your support will be appreciated.

If you would like more information, contact Patricia ni Ivor on 9380 4646. ❖

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from page 3 most significant being at the University of Newcastle Archives, the State Library of NSW's Manuscript Collection, Charles Sturt University's Regional Archives and the University of Wollongong Archives. One of the 'second eleven' collections is a project partner, and two others are on the professional reference group.

The other two partners, Gavan McCarthy and A/Professor Sue McKemmish, are specialists with international reputations and associations and will contribute the latest perspectives on resource discovery and archival

metadata. Both have also received ARC research support in the past and greatly strengthen the project team.

The project gets underway in early January 2001, coordinated by a project manager reporting to a committee of the five partners. There will also be a professional reference group comprising representatives of the National Library of Australia, Society for the Study of Labour History, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the University of Newcastle and Charles Sturt University archives, and a leading academic scholar from Swinburne University of