

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC

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1) Closure of Darwin, Hobart and Adelaide National Archives of Australia offices

These closures will affect historians' budgets for research and will severely restrict researchers in their work. FAHS has written to the Minister, Senator J. Ludwig MP, opposing the closure and noticing that digitisation is not a solution as the vast bulk of records are not digitised. Closure of the regional offices is an equity issues for Australians living in regional and remote areas.

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,26364882-2682,00.html>

2) Future of archives

On 20 November, archivist, Stephen Yorke, outlined on Archives ListServ what archives may look like in the future.

` But the custody rock (including the pure archival institution) is in my view crumbling. Just how quickly is matter for separate debate perhaps in the next few years or decade. But I would not be surprised by sudden change: just how many anticipated the crumbling of the Berlin Wall even a month before that event? The assault on custody is lead by developments in electronic records such that the records (memory stick) do not pose a physical problem any more that require specialist arrangements to be made. Not to forget developments such as Cloud Computing which mean that the record and the software are managed in a data centre somewhere perhaps in the USA. The implications of such developments for archives and the profession are more than just 'interesting'; they are critical both for the historical record and for archives as a profession. However, it seems to me that usually the best we do when such matters are raised in professional conversation is to acknowledge them but only as vague possibilities at best. Then the discussion goes back to safe, familiar topics. But if we do not face the future then archives as we know them and for the profession as we know it then both will indeed be consigned to the past (c.f. the Wall) and without our influencing the outcome.'

(Source: Archives ListServ – 20 November 2009)

3) Hogarth portrait found in Queensland

`A potential self-portrait of William Hogarth has been brought to light during an assessment of artefacts held in museums across the Sunshine Coast / Wide Bay Burnett.

Dated c1731, the portrait has generated excitement at the Tate Gallery in London where, Christine Riding, an expert on Hogarth, is now investigating its authenticity. Fiona Mohr, Museum Development Officer on the Sunshine Coast for the Queensland Museum, said this find would probably never have been made if it had not been for assessment of the significance of the Maryborough collection.'

Collections Council of Australia believes that *Significance 2.0* publication was the impetus for the Museum Development Officers to identify collections of significance.

Other artefacts were located at museums in Wondai, Maryborough and at the pastoral property, *Booubyjan*, north of Goomeri. The *Booubyjan* Homestead collection is a private collection from several generations of the Lawless family from the 1840s to present day.

A bugle played at the Japanese First Army Surrender to the Australians on HMAS Rockhampton was also located in the South Burnett region. The Maryborough Military Museum was also identified as having a very significant collection in Australia.

(Source: Collections Council *E-Bulletin* No.48 – 24 November 2009)

4) Cultural statistics released by Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has updated the Arts and Culture statistical compendium with survey results gathered both ABS and non-ABS sources over the last financial year. Updated data about scientific and cultural collections include those derived from the following surveys: Cultural Funding by Government (4183.0), Australian Public Libraries statistics, Local Government Cultural Funding, and the Museums, Australia survey (Cat. No. 8560.0); Arts and Culture in Australia: A Statistical Overview (Cat. No. 4172.0).

(Source: Collections Council *E-Bulletin* No.48 – 24 November 2009)

5) Future of academic libraries

Libraries are changing so rapidly for researchers at all levels that the following item is of interest on where the major libraries are headed. It has come onto the Libraries ListServ from OCLC Online Computer Library Centre, Inc., Dublin, Ohio 43017 USA, and academics from University of Sydney and Stanford University.

‘In order to continue to play a central role in support of scholarly research and publishing, academic libraries must:

1. Commit to continual study of the ever-changing work patterns and needs of researchers; with particular attention to disciplinary and generational differences in adoption of new modes of research and publication.
2. Design flexible new services around those parts of the research process that cause researchers the most frustration and difficulty.
3. Embed library content, services, and staff within researchers’ regular workflows; integrating with services others provide (whether on campus, at other universities, or by commercial entities) where such integration serves the needs of the researcher.
4. Embrace the role of expert information navigators and redefine reference as research consultation instead of fact-finding.
5. Reassess all library job descriptions and qualifications to ensure that training and hiring encompass the skills, education, and experience needed to support new modes of research.
6. Recognize that discovery of content will happen outside of libraries—but that libraries are uniquely suited to providing the organization and metadata that make content discoverable.
7. Embrace opportunities to focus on unique, core services and resources; while seeking collaborative partnerships to streamline common services and resources.
8. Find ways to demonstrate to senior university administrators, accreditors, and auditors the value of library services and resources to scholarship; while providing services that may seem invisible and seamless to researchers.
9. Engage researchers in the identification of primary research data sets that merit long-term preservation and access.
10. Offer alternative scholarly publishing and dissemination platforms that are integrated with appropriate repositories and preservation services.

In the midst of rapid and often unpredictable change, academic libraries can retain their position as critical partners in the research enterprise by anticipating, understanding, and addressing the challenges and opportunities inherent in new research practices.’

(Source: aliaaglin@lists.ala.org.au - 25 November 2009;
<http://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2009/2009-07.pdf>)

6) Information on time capsules

The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) Inc also has some useful information on the **Caring for Collections** page of their website about time capsules

http://www.aiccm.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=8&Itemid=74

There is also some advice on time capsules on the National Archives website at <http://www.naa.gov.au/services/family-historians/looking-after/time-capsules.aspx>. Some information on archival suppliers – who may be able to suggest containers – is at <http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/secure-and-store/physical-preservation/faq/archival-quality-material.aspx>.

(Source: aus-archivists@archivists.org.au – 26 November 2009)

7) Local history – Ringwood Lake, Victoria

Another fire in the eastern region has resulted in the loss of more local history. The Miner's Cottage near the Ringwood Lake was destroyed by fire early this morning. The cottage was opened to the public regularly and manned by volunteers from the Croydon and Ringwood Historical Societies. This loss comes on top of the February 7 fires which destroyed the Marysville Historical Society Museum as well as countless of colonial buildings in the Kangaroo Ground, St Andrews and Yarra Glen districts.

Further information about the fire and the cottage can be read on web-sites:

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/fire-destroys-a-replica-miners-cottage-in-ringwood/story-e6frf7jo-1225799981999>
<http://leader-news.whereilive.com.au/photos/gallery/ringwood-lakes-miners-cottage/>

This Miner's Cottage was similar to the ones used to house miners in the Antimony industry at Ringwood in the 1880s and 1890s.

(Source: *Herald Sun* & *Leader Community* newspaper websites – 20 November 2009)

8) Local history – Tottenham Historical Society's weekend of celebration and history publication

On 3rd and 4th of October Tottenham Historical Society held a weekend of historical celebrations, focussed on Dandaloo, north east of Tottenham town. Tottenham is the geographic centre of New South Wales and has a very vibrant and productive historical society which was formed in 2001. From its inception the Tottenham Historical Society has forged close links with the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies.

Television personality, Ray Martin, visited Tottenham and Dandaloo for the weekend. His parents had worked on *Waitara* property 17kms north of Tottenham in 1948. Ray Martin has written and published his autobiography in 2009 and he launched the Society's book, *Window on Dandaloo: a community on the Bogan River*, by Diana Chase, a member of the Tottenham Historical Society. The Dandaloo history includes the Aboriginal history of the area, contributed by local indigenous people; the pastoral history; Dandaloo town and the church which still stands. Much of the research was by oral interviews together with visits to the State records Office at Kingswood. Two hundred people attended the launch held in the grounds of the church. The church was full the next morning for the monthly ecumenical church service. A dinner for 125 people was held in the Albert Golf Club near Tottenham, at which Ray Martin was the guest speaker.

A report of the launching of the book and of the weekend's events appeared in the *Narromine News* on 7 October:

<http://www.narrominenewsonline.com.au/news/local/news/general/local-author-opens-window-on-dandaloo/1643525.aspx>

The Tottenham Historical Society has already published the books: *Tottenham Reminisces* (2003) (200 pages), *Unearthed: the story of copper mining in Tottenham and Albert NSW* (39 pages), *Tottenham Heritage Walk* and *Back to Bobadah* Information booklet (2006) (40 pages)

Members, led by Mary McMillan are now researching the history of Albert district.

(Source: Ruth Kerr – personal visit – 3-4 October 2009 and *Narromine News* 7 Oct 2009)