

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

LIBRARY NEWS

Volume 8
Number 2
October 1986

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The second issue of University of Adelaide Library News for 1986 contains a wide ranging series of articles on our services and collections.

There are two articles concerning artworks in the Library; the first outlines what has been done recently to display the Library's collection of framed prints to best advantage while the second article describes the Aboriginal paintings that are a feature of the entrance foyer of the Library.

Dr Zuckerman, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, gives details of an important manuscript purchase and Ellen Randva has an article on endowment funds that the Library uses to make this sort of acquisition possible.

This issue also contains a description of the steps the Library has taken to extend the availability of its on-line catalogue, BIBLION, to remote users and an article on the guides to reference works that are produced by the subject librarians for use in seminars and for the general benefit of our users.

The final contribution is a piece on the Library's new signage system which is helping to make our resources more easily accessible.

Alan Keig

Liz Lee

ARTWORKS IN THE LIBRARY

Over the years Library staff as well as Library users have grown accustomed to the paintings and prints distributed throughout the building. Go into someone's office, and there will be a selection from the Library's collection; walk around the reading areas and framed prints provide visual relief from bookstacks and carrels.

During 1985 it was decided that the renovations taking place within the building provided an excellent opportunity to list artworks in the Library and to relocate them, if this were appropriate. The task fell to a small working party of two staff, Natalie Williams and Linda Wilkinson, whose brief was not only to list the pictures already hung in the Library, but to have some unframed prints previously purchased by the Library framed, and to rearrange and rehang the total in such a way that the aesthetic appeal of the Library would be enhanced, and the works themselves displayed according to a coherent arrangement.

Because the building is not in itself of straightforward design, having been added to over the years, Natalie's and Linda's job was made more difficult. In order to overcome some of these difficulties, they first listed all the artworks hung in the Library, noting their location, and investigated store rooms and other places where paintings might be found not on public display. Some reproductions were discovered to be in too poor condition to merit hanging, and these were relegated to storage. Several groups were defined, and works divided according to style, artist and quality. As a result seven categories were established.

- 1) original paintings
- 2) reproductions - Australian Colonial
- 3) reproductions - Australian Modern
- 4) reproductions - European Impressionist
- 5) reproductions - European Modern
- 6) etchings/woodcuts - original prints and watercolours
- 7) old prints, photographs, etc.

The only list of Library artworks in existence was old and out-of-date, but was useful as a starting point for listing holdings. Assistance was also sought from the University's Curator, Ms Pamela Runge, and from a member of the University staff with a special interest in the Works of Art Fund. Both provided useful advice, with the latter arranging for the long-term loan of three Aboriginal paintings which are described elsewhere in this issue of University of Adelaide Library News.

In addition to listing the paintings already in the Library and grouping them into categories, Natalie and Linda also had to take into account the unframed prints held by the Library and previously unframed. With the assistance of a small sum allocated from the Library's budget, they were able to have many of these prints framed and some others repaired and reframed.

At the time the bulk of their work was going on, parts of the building were undergoing extensive renovation, so that it was impossible to determine the long term location of many items. Some works have been hung in temporary locations and others have been stored awaiting the completion of building alterations, particularly the new service areas on Level 3 South.

In due course a plan was produced, concentrating the Australian works of art in the public areas on Level 3, with other Australian Colonial reproductions in specific areas on other levels. European reproductions are largely confined to Level 2, and staff areas have a variety of reproductions, often more related to individual preferences of the staff concerned than to coherence of arrangement.

The catalogue produced by the working party has provided the Library with a comprehensive and up-to-date list of artworks in the Library. It is now possible to see the concentration on Australian artists of the Heidelberg school, as well as on South Australian artists such as Sir Hans Heysen. This emphasis is certain to be maintained, as, since Linda Wilkinson's resignation, Natalie has carried on with the work of finding new pictures for the Library and funds have been allocated to allow more prints to be bought and framed.

Recently Natalie gave the benefit of her experience to the Law Library where she arranged for both Australian and European paintings to be displayed.

The working party's achievement over the past year has been instrumental in considerably enhancing the Library's collection of artworks and displaying them to their best advantage for the enjoyment of all users.

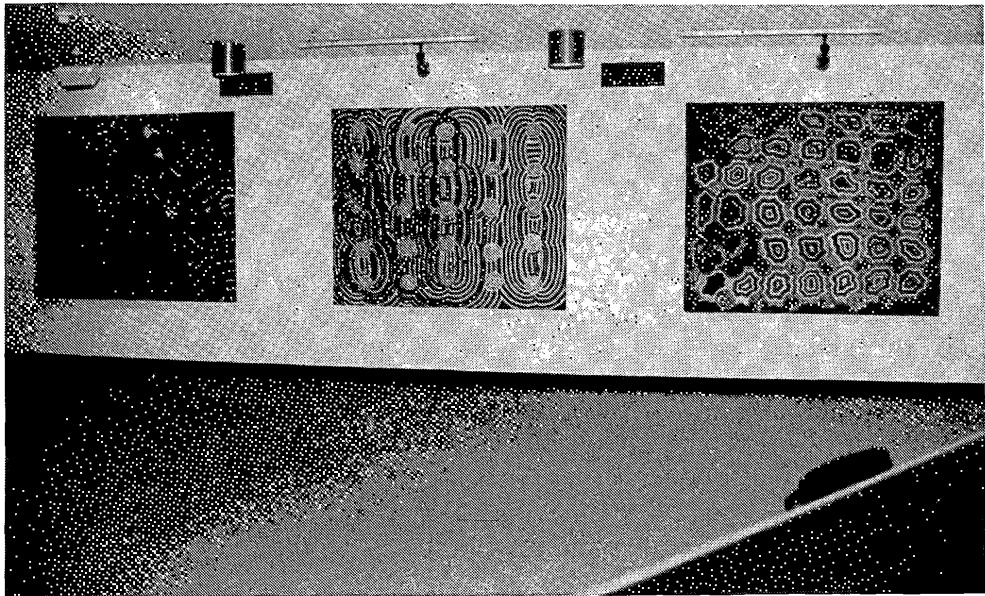
Chris Hone

ABORIGINAL PAINTINGS

Three striking works of art by Aboriginal painters of the Western Desert occupy pride of place in the entrance foyer of the Barr Smith Library.

The paintings were purchased by the University of Adelaide Foundation in 1984 from a grant of \$8,700 to the Works of Art Fund. Professor David Saunders of the Department of Architecture, who arranged the purchase, says that the paintings represent a transitional development in Aboriginal culture.

The motifs in the paintings have evolved from the culture of the Papunya Aborigines who have traditionally set mosaics of sand, stones, coloured earth and feathers on the ground to illustrate their Dream-time stories and ceremonies. Gradually the artists adopted a technique of painting the motifs on large linen canvases pegged out on the sands, using finest quality linen and acrylic paints.



Aboriginal paintings, entrance foyer

The painting on the left is by Kaapa Tjampitjinpa of the Anmatjera tribe and tells of an old blind man who sat at Mikantji and sang the song cycle which is now associated with these sites. As he sang he

drew the elements of the storm to him, from Mirrawarri to the west and Kulpuluntu to the east, with long lengths of hairstring. The central section of the painting shows a ground design and the lines surrounding this section depict the length of hairstring used by the old man. The oblong shapes in each corner of the painting are womens' dancing boards and the tracks of an egret are also shown. The background design depicts the prolific regrowth of the vegetation after the rains.

The middle work is by John Tjakamarra of the Pintupi tribe. It relates to the Tingari ceremonies at the site of Kaakarantintja (Lake McDonald) to the west of the Kintore Community near the Western Australia - Northern Territory border. It is said that snakes live in the lake and the people are too afraid to approach the area. The Tingari is a mytho-ritual complex or series of traditions of deeply religious significance. Because the ceremonies of the Tingari men are of a secret-sacred nature, no details are permitted to be given of the ceremonies themselves.

The right hand painting is also from the Pintupi tribe, by Gideon Tjupurrula. It depicts designs used in the ground paintings associated with the secret-sacred site of Mitukatjeri (Ligertwood Cliffs) south of Sandy Blight Junction. This site is one through which the travelling band of Tingari men passed in the mythological era. These men established the song cycles, ritual procedures and ceremonies that are still known as Tingari.

Copyright of all three paintings remains with the individual artists and permission must be sought before any reproduction may be made.

Complementing these three acrylic paintings, two traditional bark paintings by Aboriginal artists have been hung on the opposite wall of the entrance foyer. The first is 'Wititj the Ancestor Snake' by Mick Magani of the Jinang Tribe, Arnhem Land. Wititj the Ancestor Snake had a totemic place near the Goyder River which is the country of the Echidna Totem People. The flying foxes, the cheeky caterpillars, the leeches and the goanna are all fellow countrymen. Magani calls these Totems 'My Father'.

The second bark painting is by the artist Gubargu, also from Arnhem Land, from the Mailli/Gunwingu Tribe, Liverpool River. It is entitled 'The Crocodile Ancestor'.

Alan Keig

THE MANUSCRIPT RECORD OF THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY

The Barr Smith Library has purchased a rare and important set of manuscripts which make a major contribution to the history of Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russian history. The twelve volumes were produced by hectograph machine in only three sets, all of which until recently were held by the Hoover Institution on War, Peace and Revolution located on the campus of Stanford University. The authors of these volumes included several of Russia's senior civil servants, some of Russia's most prominent generals of artillery, senior Quartermaster Generals and the Russian Ambassador to the United States. Their contents, based entirely on primary sources, are vital to an understanding of the performance of the Russian Army during the First World War and the role of the United States in supporting the anti-Bolshevik forces between 1918 and 1922.

Of equal importance, these volumes serve as an essential introduction to the vast and divided archive of the Imperial Russian Embassy in Washington. The documents include the papers of the Provisional Government which came to power after the February Revolution and remained the Russian government of record in the U.S. until 1922. Between 1922 and 1933 these papers (including the volumes noted above) remained under the care of Sergei Ughet who enjoyed full diplomatic status in his capacity as financial attaché and custodian of Russian Government property in the United States up to the time of the diplomatic recognition of the U.S.S.R. by the U.S. in 1933. Ughet himself compiled and wrote several of these invaluable volumes.

Despite the value of this collection it has remained largely unused. Part of the reason for this lack of use is to be found in the treatment of the Embassy papers soon after U.S. - U.S.S.R. diplomatic relations were established. Ughet successfully managed to keep the Embassy papers out of Soviet hands by dividing it into two parts. He despatched a portion of the collection to the Hoover Library on August 10, 1933. These papers were not made available to scholars until 1973, though they only became truly accessible with the completion of the index last year. After considerable bureaucratic wrangling over exactly who owned the remaining 1,800 boxes of records secreted in a Washington warehouse, the State Department decided that the Russian Embassy papers were the property of the United States Government. In June 1948 they became part of the National Archives in Washington.¹

I am one of the first scholars systematically to make use of these records (in both Washington and California) for my research on the supply of the Russian Army during the First World War and my revision of the standard view of Woodrow Wilson's relationship with Russia during his presidential years between 1913-1920. The hectographed manuscript volumes purchased by the Barr Smith Library make possible a continuation of that work and will also open the path for research to postgraduate students interested in Russian/Soviet-American relations.

By the way, the Soviet Government which does not permit non-Soviet scholars access to its own records on the topics covered in these manuscripts and the records they summarize, is still demanding the return of the Embassy papers to the U.S.S.R.

Dr Fredric S. Zuckerman
Senior Lecturer in History.

1. For a detailed history of the disposition of the Russian Embassy papers see: John H. Brown, "The Disappearing Russian Embassy Archives 1922-1949", Prologue Vol.14, No.1, pp.5-13.

USER SERVICES - PROFILES

SUSAN WOODBURN

Susan Woodburn joined the staff of the Barr Smith Library in February this year as Special Collections Librarian. She holds this position jointly with the position of University Archivist, to which she was appointed in February 1983.



Susan holds a B.A. (Hons) and M.A. in History from the University of Adelaide, and in 1973-74 took a Masters degree course in Librarianship at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, specialising in college and academic libraries and archives administration and being awarded on graduation the Jesse Hauk Shera award "for promise of future scholarly contribution to librarianship". She joined the (then) South Australian Archives in December 1974 and remained until August 1979, having also from 1977-79 been research assistant (half-time) to the Department of Community Medicine jointly with her position within the State Archives. She has been active in the Australian Society of Archivists (formerly the Archives section of the Library Association of Australia) for many years, being variously secretary, newsletter editor and Convener of the Adelaide branch between 1978 and 1986. Susan is currently a member of the national Council of the Society and Convener of its Consultants' Registration Committee.

As Special Collections Librarian, Susan is responsible through the Collection Development and Research Librarian for the Library's rich and varied research collection of rare, unique and valuable book and archival materials. The collections have evolved as part of the teaching and research resource of the Library and have been substantially augmented by gifts and bequests and - particularly in the case of the Pacific and Theatre collections - by judicious purchase and generous deposit of private collections. The principal responsibilities of the Special Collections Librarian are to conserve these materials for current and future scholarly use, and to provide access to the riches of the collections by the provision of reference and bibliographical services and by occasional displays and exhibitions.

A Friends of the Special Collections group was formed in 1985 to "defend, support, maintain and promote the Special Collections" and interested persons can contact the Secretary, Neil McKellar-Stewart, on 228 5069 or the Chairperson, Robin Eaden, on 228 5618. The Special Collections Librarian can be contacted on 228 5224.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Gifts in the form of endowments and bequest monies have greatly assisted the growth of the Library from its humble beginnings - in 1877 the princely sum of £11 6s 11d was expended on books - and have provided a firm foundation for the Library today, with its annual book budget of more than \$2.17 million and its holdings of more than one million volumes.

Proceeds from endowments and bequests are administered as separate funds by the University. Unlike ordinary book funds, the income does not have to be spent in any one year. Any special conditions attached to their use are noted against the individual funds as listed below.

BARR SMITH ENDOWMENTS

In 1892 Robert Barr Smith gave £1,000 to the University for the purchase of books. Between 1892 and 1911, his gifts to the Library totalled £9,000, and the Council, in appreciation, resolved in 1899 that the Library should bear the name of its chief benefactor.

After his death, members of his family gave £11,000 in 1920 for the permanent endowment of the Library to perpetuate his memory within the University. His son, Thomas Elder Barr Smith, generously offered £20,000 in 1927 to finance the construction of a building to house the growing collection and gave a further £10,000 as a permanent endowment in 1941.

Interest earned from these endowments is now used to purchase expensive works, both secondhand and new.

A.M. SIMPSON BEQUEST

Mrs A.M. Simpson paid £500 in 1918 to found the A.M. Simpson Library in Aeronautics in memory of her late husband, Alfred Muller Simpson, son of the founder of A. Simpson and Son Ltd., one of Australia's largest metal manufacturers. Although concerned with running the business after his father's death, Simpson's activities multiplied as a businessman and an administrator throughout his long career. Simpson died on 28 September 1917, at the age of 74. It was ironical that he continued to use horse-cab taxis to the end of his life, never owned a motor car, but maintained an interest in aviation.

ELIZABETH JACKSON

Sarah Elizabeth Jackson, M.A., was a former tutor in philosophy at the University. In 1924, £650 was raised by public subscription and together with a £100 donation by Methodist Ladies College Old Scholars' Association, was paid to the University to set up a library collection in child psychology, in memory of Elizabeth Jackson. Presently, interest from this gift is used for purchase of items in that field, and suggestions come from the Psychology Department and the Psychology Subject Librarian.

SIR WILLIAM MITCHELL ENDOWMENT

In 1940, £5,000 was given to the University for the purchase of books for the Barr Smith Library. No special conditions were made for its use, but bank interest earned is used to purchase expensive items, along the lines of the Barr Smith Endowments.

VIOLET DE MOLE MEMORIAL FUND

A sum of £256 (later increased to £456 in 1952) was raised by public subscription to found the Violet de Mole prize in French, with the balance used to purchase material for the Library on French language and literature. The French subject librarian and the Department of French choose these items for purchase.

HENRY SHORNEY MEMORIAL FUND

In 1954, Mrs A.L.C. Shorney gave £1,000 to endow the Henry Shorney Memorial Library. Interest on this sum is used to purchase major texts on ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology for the medical collection.

SIR HENRY NEWLAND BEQUEST

Henry Simpson Newland (1873-1969) had a most distinguished career as a nineteenth century graduate of the Adelaide University School of Medicine. He was the first graduate to qualify (in 1902) for Adelaide's degree of Master of Surgery, and followed this with medical service through World War I, and an extensive career as a surgeon. In 1962 he gave the Library a gift of 87 volumes, mostly rare medical works dating from 1583 to 1908. After his death in 1969, he left a legacy of \$500 for the purchase of items on the history of medicine.

BENHAM BEQUEST

During his career, Adelaide lawyer Mr E.W. Benham was a part-time lecturer in the law of property from 1910 to 1938. In 1969 the University received \$100,000 from the estate of Mr Benham. This amount was split into equal amounts between English, History and Law and interest earned is spent on expensive new or secondhand items in English literature; British history; law of property; private international law and British legal history. The generous bequest also enabled the establishment of two annual prizes for original theses in English literature and English political history. It was also used to assist in the purchase of British sculptor Henry Moore's bronze 'Reclining connected forms' now in place between Bonython Hall and the Law School.

EARL BEQUEST

Professor J.C. Earl was born in North Adelaide in 1890 and obtained his Doctor of Science at Adelaide in 1926. He was Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Sydney from 1928 to 1947 and, after spending his retirement both in England and Adelaide, died here in 1978 at the age of 88. Throughout his life he was a regular visitor to the Department of Organic Chemistry and the Barr Smith Library, and bequeathed \$70,000 to the University for the purposes of the Barr Smith Library, especially relating to acquisitions in the field of history.

COWAN FUND

A gift of \$20,000 was made to the Library in 1985 by Mrs A.M. Cowan, wife of the late William Albert Cowan who was University Librarian from 1933 to 1964. Interest earned is to be spent on journals (current or backsets) particularly in the areas of medical and scientific research related to diabetes.

Ellen Randva

DEPARTMENTAL ACCESS TO BIBLION

In April 1984 the University Librarian wrote to all Departments inviting participation in a trial to experiment with decentralised access to the Library's on-line catalogue, BIBLION. The aims of the trial were to explore any technical difficulties, to gauge the impact on response times and to seek user input. Seventeen Departments indicated their interest in participating in this trial, although three of these Departments had not yet purchased suitable computer terminals. All interested Departments were visited or contacted to establish an understanding of the objectives of the trial and to confirm technical details. Unfortunately it was not possible to proceed any further in 1984 because of delays in the installation of the Ethernet cable to the Library, and by the time this had been done a new problem arose related to the University's decision to dispose of its Cyber computer.

When questions about access routes across the network had been resolved a trial was conducted from June to September 1985 with the Departments of Community Medicine, Computer Science, Geography, Organic Chemistry and Physical and Inorganic Chemistry. The Department of Community Medicine offered co-operative access to the neighbouring departments of Medicine, Surgery and Psychiatry and provided on-line monitoring which was useful in confirming patterns of access to BIBLION. The Department of Computer Science evaluated the system from a security point of view and supplied a written report on this aspect. The trial included for all participants one or more seminars (presented by the relevant subject librarian) on information retrieval techniques.

At the end of September 1985 a review of the trial was undertaken. Usage patterns had been established and there had been no technical problems. Most access by the remote users was sought during core hours when there is already intense use of terminals by library users and library staff, and when response time degradation occurs.

ACCESS TO BIBLION

Based on the data collected during the trial full access to BIBLION was given to all Departments who had originally expressed interest in the trial or who had requested access up to September 1985. Access was by password only so that further monitoring of usage patterns was

possible, and simultaneous access was limited. In October 1985 further information was gathered from Departments in the Faculty of Arts to determine which of them already possessed, or intended to acquire, appropriate equipment for connection to the network and access to BIBLION. In December 1985 invitations were extended to all other Departments who were believed to have a network connection and an appropriate terminal. There was a limited response.

At present there are twenty-nine Departments registered as network users of BIBLION. Access is possible either on a core-time basis or an after-hours basis. Core time access covers 6am - 10pm Monday to Friday and 6am - 6pm Saturday and Sunday. After-hours access covers 6am - 9am and 5pm - 10 pm Monday to Friday and 6am - 6 pm Saturday and Sunday. Core-time access is restricted in order to protect response times for the Library's CIRCON loan system, book cataloguing processes and for users at terminals in the Library. After-hours access is available on request.

LOAN DETAILS ON BIBLION

From the start of Term 3 1986 users of BIBLION will be able to see loan details of books (but not journals) so that it will be possible for remote users to find out if a book is on loan or not, and if it is on loan, the date it is due for return.

Further systems enhancements, including the upgrading of brief records so that they can more readily be found by subject or keyword approach, are about to be incorporated.

It is hoped that plans to upgrade the Barr Smith Library's computing facilities in 1987-1988 are successful, so that all requirements for access to BIBLION by the University community can be fulfilled.

Heather Howard

SUBJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES

The Barr Smith Library has an active user education programme to help students find their way around the collections and to ensure that they can make the best use of the Library's resources. An important part of the programme consists of seminars arranged by the subject librarians where students are shown how to use reference works, such as bibliographies and abstracting and indexing services, in their area of interest. These reference sources, located in the Reference Collection on Level 3, can provide access to categories of research material, for example journal articles, which are not indexed in the Library's catalogues, and can simplify the process of locating information for essays and research projects.

To supplement this seminar programme, the Library publishes subject bibliographies listing reference material held not only in the Reference Collection, but also relevant material held in other collections. These subject bibliographies are produced by subject librarians with detailed knowledge of the resources of the subject area concerned, and are usually updated annually.

Material listed may include dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, abstracting and indexing services, reviews, handbooks and atlases, with information on the online retrieval services available for that subject area.



Subject bibliographies

The subject bibliographies cover most subject areas and are geared to courses taught at the University. In addition, the Library has published three more bibliographies which list material in areas of interest to a wide range of users. Australian and British Parliamentary Papers is a valuable annotated finding guide to this section of the Library's resources, Newspapers in the Barr Smith Library gives the holdings and location of all newspapers held by the Library in both hard copy and on microfilm, and Thesis and Report Writing lists guides to essay writing, and the preparation of manuscripts and theses.

Sample copies of the complete range of subject bibliographies are displayed near the Information Desk on Level 3, and copies are available from the librarian on duty.

The following subject bibliographies are available:

American Literature	French History and Politics
Anatomy and Physiology	Genetics
Anthropology	Geography
Applied Maths	Geology
Asian Studies	German
Australian and British Parliamentary Papers	History of Medicine
Australian Government Publications	Linguistics
Australian History	Mathematical Physics
Australian Literary Studies	Mathematical Statistics
Biology	Mechanical Engineering
Botany	Medieval History
Chemical Engineering	Music
Chemistry	New Literatures in English
Civil Engineering	Newspapers in the Barr Smith Library
Classical Studies	Old and Middle English
Commerce	Pacific History
Computing Science	Pharmacology, Pharmacy & Toxicology
Dentistry	Philosophy
Drama	Physics
Economics	Psychiatry
Education	Pure Maths
Electrical Engineering	Renaissance Literature
English	Russian History
English I	Science
Environmental Studies	Thesis and Report Writing
European History	Women's Studies
French	Zoology

Alan Keig

USER SERVICES - PROFILES

ALAN KEIG

Alan Keig joined the staff of the Barr Smith Library in 1977. He began his career in the State Library of South Australia in 1957, gaining experience in the Adelaide Lending Service, Research Service and Reference Library before being seconded as Librarian in Charge of the South Australian Institute of Technology in 1960. In 1968 Alan entered the university library world when he took up an appointment at the Flinders University Library where he served in the Cataloguing, Reference and Acquisition Departments. In the Barr Smith Library he was Serials Librarian from 1978 to 1984 when he transferred to the Subject Librarians group with responsibility for Philosophy,



Government Publications and informal user education. He is also responsible for the Library's guides for new users, the production of the subject bibliographies and issuing the Library's newsletter, Newsline. From December 1984 Alan added the subject areas of French and Linguistics to his area of responsibility.

Alan has been involved with the University of Adelaide Library News since the first issue in June 1979 and has been its editor from September 1984. He is a Bachelor of Arts graduate of the University of Adelaide and completed an Honours course at Flinders University, specialising in Old English. Alan is a voracious reader and devotes whatever spare time he can find to vegetable growing, house restoration, computer programming and regular trips to the Flinders Ranges and far outback parts of Australia.

THE MAZE UNRAVELLED

The Barr Smith Library must seem a formidable place to a user entering for the first time, especially if their previous experience of a library was the Resource Centre at school or the local public library with a collection of a few thousand books. Studies investigating the impact of unfamiliar environments on people show reactions ranging from a general feeling of disorientation to severe stress in the case of some individuals.

Many people in an unfamiliar situation are unwilling to ask for help, often because they feel they may be admitting that they have shortcomings, and prefer to wander around hoping to find what they want. The Library has an active orientation programme for new university students but we recognise the fact that not all users will take advantage of guided tours of the building or will attend subject seminars that are designed to enable them to make the most effective use of the Library's resources.

It is essential that Library users be able to find their own way around the building and a signage system should cater for this as well as for users who have asked for help at the Information Desk. The basic principle of a signage system must be orientation; users must be able to tell where they are and where to go next.

The Library needs to tell people what services and resources are available (information), how to get to them (direction), and to assure them that they have arrived at the appropriate place (identification).

An effective sign system is not simply to help shy users find their way around the building; it is there to complete the process that begins with the purchase, cataloguing and storage of materials.

THE LIBRARY MAZE

A maze epitomises not being able to find your way. Libraries are almost classic examples of the Hampton Court style of maze : row upon row of apparently identical shelves that you cannot easily see through but along which you must wander, turning innumerable corners, and traversing seemingly endless corridors lined with books. Add a few extra difficulties such as low ceilings and poor lighting and you begin to wonder if there are not generations of past library users perpetually roaming in ghostly bewilderment up and down the aisles in the bookstacks of all major libraries.

The Barr Smith Library has bookstack mazes that can produce confusion in the minds of the most experienced of our users and even, it must be said, in the minds of librarians whose task it is to help people find their way. Steps are being taken to improve the situation with better lighting and a more logical arrangement of shelving; we intend to take full advantage of the opportunity to create a more logical arrangement of material in the collection when the Undergraduate Collection, Main Collection and bound journals are integrated next year.

ARCHITECTURAL DIFFICULTIES

Wayfinding and signposting in the Barr Smith Library are made more difficult by the physical layout. The library is really two separate buildings linked together but, unfortunately, the floor levels do not coincide. For this reason some floors at the Northern end of the building have had to be labelled Level 2¹/₂ and Level 3¹/₂. A further difficulty is that we are on a sloping site so that the ground floor is on Level 4 at the South end of the building and on Level 1 at the North end. The new entrance which now comes in to the centre of the building on Level 3 has helped enormously in removing the confusion caused by having two entrances, one on Level 4 South and the other on Level 2 North, and has allowed us to make a more logical arrangement of the functional areas of the Library.

SIGNPOSTING PROGRAMME

With all the difficulties of separate collections, architectural anomalies and maze-like stacks it is inexcusable that the Barr Smith Library has never had an effective sign system to help users find their way around the building. The first step towards rectifying this situation was taken in 1983 when a working party was formed to look at the problem and to put together a wayfinding programme. It was obvious that there was an enormous need for improvement; existing signs epitomised for the most part all the faults that a signage system could have. Signs in the Library were often either inconspicuous or misplaced and the messages that they purported to give to users were sometimes ambiguous, or quite often, completely misleading. There was a total lack of coordination in their function and appearance so that they were visually and informationally confusing. One of the early tasks of the working party was to remove some of the worst offending signs on the principle that no sign at all was better than one that misinformed users.

AGREED NAMES

The working party on signposting identified a major stumbling block which would inhibit any attempt to guide users; there was a plethora of names for different parts of the building, for collections, utilities, services and even Departments of the Barr Smith Library. The first task was, therefore, to standardise names for everything to do with the Library and its services. A list of names was agreed to and published in December 1983. All Library staff were encouraged to use the agreed names to refer to areas and services, both in conversations among themselves and when directing users. The process of re-education is still going on today as some people find it difficult to forget a name they have been using (for many years in some instances) and to use the standard name.

By July 1984 the working party had completed a thorough investigation of signage in other libraries and similar institutions and had produced a preliminary list of signs together with recommendations concerning the lettering styles, sign system and equipment needs.

THE SIGNAGE SYSTEM

An examination of statistics of type of enquiry answered at the Information Desk shows that directional enquiries ("how do I find the way to...") have always predominated. The figures for last year are typical:

INFORMATION DESK STATISTICS 1985

CATEGORY	NO OF ENQUIRIES	%
DIRECTIONAL	20 852	56.01
QUICK REFERENCE	8 716	23.41
REFERENCE	4 597	12.35
CARD CATALOGUE	1 703	4.58
BIBLION	1 360	3.65
TOTAL	37 228	100.00

An effective sign system should provide immediate benefit to users; instead of answering the same directional questions over and over, staff at the Information desk can concentrate on giving specialist advice. The aim was for users to be able to find their own way around the building, with advice from staff when necessary, by means of logical, unbroken sequences of signs.

The starting point, it was decided, should be a large directory board in the entrance foyer which listed the services and collections, with arrows to point the user in the right direction. Once started, users can pick out signs that lead to the destination, where there will be an identification sign so that it is obvious that they have arrived at the place they were looking for.

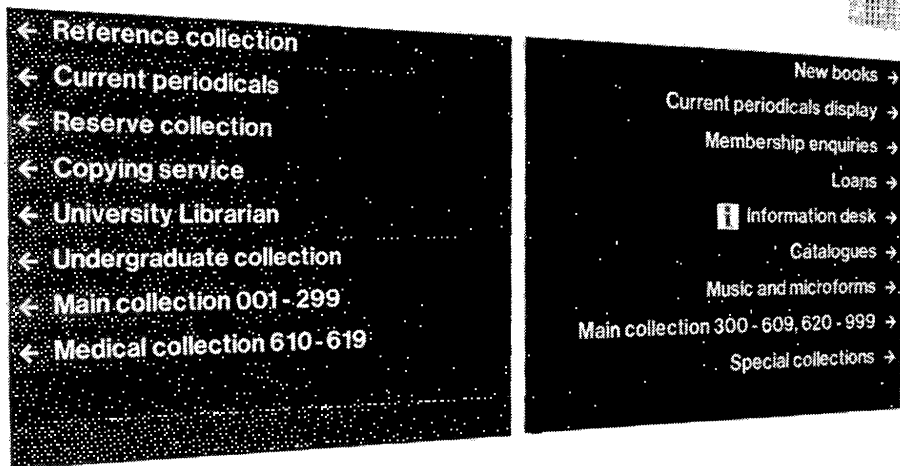
As well as being in a logical, unbroken sequence, signs were to be placed at decision points such as intersections, stairs, lifts or other points of potential divergence.

The physical appearance of the signs was chosen so that they could be clearly seen, not swallowed by their environment. They had to stand out from their background and yet be in sympathetic co-existence with their surroundings.

STANDARDS

The working party decided to adopt the standards developed by the Hosplan Research and Development Group which was established to enable hospital administrators, planners and designers to specify the design, production and installation of signs in Australian hospitals. The Hosplan system uses 'Hospital Alphabet' lettering which was specifically designed for use in hospitals by the Department of Health and Security in Britain. The Barr Smith Library chose to use an almost identical, but more readily available lettering style, Helvetica Medium.

Helvetica is a bold, sans serif letter style with a large 'x-height' (a module based on the height of the lower case letter 'x') for lower case letters, and short ascenders and descenders. These characteristics produce excellent legibility of both capital and lower case letters. The Library purchased the Leteron System's Econ-O-Sign V machine which produces 50mm white acrylic adhesive letters and a Kroy XL from Reynolds Leteron Company for the 25mm lettering. Adhesive acrylic pictograms to identify facilities such as male and female toilets and the Information Desk, using the internationally adopted symbols and colours, were produced locally for us by Signmakers Pty. Ltd.



Directory board, entrance foyer

SLATZ SIGN BOARDS

The same company supplied the blank sign boards from the Slatz system range to which we applied the acrylic lettering. Designed and manufactured in Australia, Slatz are extruded aluminium shapes that are available in six different widths and which can be supplied in any length up to three metres. They can be easily mounted on walls either singly or in banks by means of plastic clips. Ceiling suspended Slatz are easily assembled as single signs, back to back, or in banks one above the other and are simply suspended with plastic coated wire cable.

We chose a dark brown anodised finish for the Slatz, to which we applied the white acrylic lettering, to achieve a good contrast against the predominantly cream and white background colours of most walls and ceilings in the Library. Two of the six standard widths of Slatz were specified: King Slatz which are 119mm wide for signs with 50mm lettering, which are easily legible from a distance of 8 metres, and Middle Slatz, 57mm wide, for signs with 25mm lettering, which are legible from a distance of at least 3 metres.

All signs have been installed close to the natural line of vision, according to the Hosplan standard. Ceiling suspended signs have the bottom of the sign (or lowest sign in a bank) 2.1 metres from the floor and wall or door mounted signs are installed 1.5 metres from floor level. The only exception we have made to the standard height is for ceiling suspended signs at the foot of stairs which are hung 300mm higher so that people coming down the stairs do not feel they might be about to bump their heads on them, an effect which is psychological rather than physiological.

EFFECTIVENESS

Major directional signs leading from the main directory board were installed to coincide with the opening of the Library's new centrally placed entrance in August 1985, and they have been gradually added to over the past year. We have had to cope with changing locations and new facilities which have demonstrated in a very practical way how easy it is to modify signs when you have in house machinery to produce them. We established six standard lengths of Slatz from the outset and keep a small stock of blanks on hand. If a sign needs changing it is simply a matter of making up a new one on a blank and clipping the new sign in place of the superseded one. The acrylic letters can be removed from the old sign so that it becomes a blank for subsequent re-use. A co-ordinated, permanent and attractive sign system tends to reduce the incidence of graffiti; signs and notices of a temporary nature are often 'amended' by users, possibly because of frustration induced by their ineffectiveness. We have had only one or two minor incidents involving our new signs in the year since they were installed.

THE FUTURE

The Barr Smith Library is still in a state of change and the sign system will be amended to guide users to the new locations of services and materials as they are moved. A group has been established, the Working Party on User Requirements, that has as one of its responsibilities the maintenance of an effective system of signs and notices in the Library. The task of this group is far from complete: all aspects of signposting and wayfinding will be considered and incorporated into an overall system for the benefit of Library users.

SOURCES

The major source of ideas for the new signage was Sign Systems for Libraries: Solving the Wayfinding Problem, compiled and edited by Dorothy Pollet and Peter C. Haskell. N.Y., Bowker, 1979.

Standards for signs and their installation were derived from Hospital Signposting System and Manual. Stage 2. Surry Hills, N.S.W. Hospital Planning Advisory Centre, 1981.

Alan Keig.



THE COVER

University of Adelaide Library News has fortunately discovered a talented photographer among Barr Smith Library staff - Anne Webster from Special Collections - who has enhanced this issue with some of her work.

The cover photograph was taken from the Darling Building using a Fujica STN 605 camera and Tamron 2.8, 35-70mm lens. For this shot Anne used ASA 100 Fuji film with a shutter speed of 500 at f.5.6.