

basic control. I hope and expect, however, that the discussion will continue to broaden in Europe and elsewhere in order to explore related concerns such as: actual evaluation issues in provenance-based appraisal of the evidence of record creators' functions; the nature of record-keeping systems in the computer age and their place as focal points of the application of provenance; the type and role of information about the origins and original characteristics of records as access points in information retrieval; the forms (documentary provenance) and functions (functional provenance) of emerging types of computerized records; preservation of provenance information and the functionality of computerized records across software and hardware changes; personal archives in the computer age (does the provenance approach apply as thoroughly in this area, especially in appraisal by "collecting" archives?); and even deeper examination of the idea of the provenance (or origin) of a record and its relationship to the meaning of a record. To digress briefly on the latter, what does the concept of origin mean? Important insights into the nature of the act of record creation, and thus the meaning of the record, can be gained by studying the social nature of record creation, or by examining the interrelationship of three contributors to the record: the recorder, the intended audience for the record, and the persons or things recorded. All three are involved in record creation. We often focus only on a few aspects of the first one. The rich layering of provenance information offers much for archivists and others to explore.

The 1993 Stockholm conference provides clear confirmation that thinking about the meaning and application of provenance is now high on the agenda of the international archival community, especially in relation to computerization of records. As this book demonstrates, working out the implications of the reaffirmation of provenance animates the most important thinking in the archival field today. This valuable book brings together important European thinking on these matters.

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**The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives' First Fifty Years.** SUE McKEMMISH and MICHAEL PIGGOTT, eds. Clayton, Australia: Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, 1994. i-xiii, 236 p. ISBN 0-86862-019-X.

If any doubts exist that our Australian colleagues are rightly proud of their archival heritage, one need look no further than the present volume, comprised of a dozen essays written mainly by senior staff of their national agency, Australian Archives. These essays, covering the gamut of functions performed by a major institution, attempt to inform and persuade readers of the distinct role Australia has played, and continues to play, in the development of our profession. And, for the most part, they succeed admirably.

The first essays in the book deal with historical background. In "Beginnings," Michael Piggott sketches early efforts toward creation of a national archival agency after the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, and then describes the events and decisions leading up to the appointment in 1944 of Ian Maclean as head of the new Archives Division of the National Library, rounding out the dis-

cussion with some brief reflections on national beginnings, individuals, circumstance, and war as factors in the establishment of archival agencies in general. This is followed by Anne-Marie Schwirtlich's "The Australian War Memorial and Commonwealth Records, 1942-1953," which builds on and complements Piggott's essay by examining the archival role of the War Memorial, established in 1917 to document the Australian experience of war through the acquisition and preservation of pertinent records, artifacts, library material, and artwork. Though it rightly focuses on the years in which the Archives Division of the Commonwealth Library was emerging, this well researched paper succeeds in tracing the shifting archival responsibilities of the Memorial from its early days to the present.

The historical pieces are followed by essays on custodianship, access policy, and public programming. In "Keepers of the Fame? The Custodial Role of Australian Archives -- Its History and Its Future," Steve Stuckey argues that accumulation of World War II records early on in the development of the national archives, and archivists' perceived need to bring it all under some measure of intellectual control--whether or not it would eventually be transferred to dedicated archival custody--led to archivists acting as both custodians of older records and administrators of more current ones. Along with the dispersal of records in regional repositories and some records of continuing value remaining in original agencies, Stuckey argues, these developments uniquely identify Australian Archives and position it favourably in meeting the challenges of preservation, maintenance, and access posed by electronic records. This is followed by "The Evolution of Commonwealth Access Policy," in which H.J.W. Stokes traces the changes in availability of records to the public, from a fifty-year closure period early on to the present thirty-year rule under the *Archives Act*, its relations to freedom of information legislation, and the effects of the changes on researchers and archivists alike. Helen Nosworthy next offers a spirited defense of public programming in her "Reaching Out: A Core Programme for Australian Archives," describing the rationale for, results of, and hopes for the agency's recent commitment to reaching a broader constituency through exhibitions and publications, such as the present volume (and their admirable World Wide Web site, which can be reached at "<http://www.aa.gov.au>").

These essays are followed by diverse pieces on management, prime ministerial records, and the writings of Ian Maclean. Lee McGregor's "Managing a Government Archives: Insights and Reflections" offers helpful commentary on the politics of the archival manager's job. In so doing, she provides a fine sketch toward one of the most useful books for archivists yet to be written, which might be titled "Playing the Game." In his article on "Prime Ministers as Recordkeepers: British Models and Australian Practice," Graeme Powell first discusses the kind and volume of records made and received by British Prime Ministers, effectively categorizing them as accumulators, communicators, and recorders. He then uses these categories and examples to explore the varieties of record-keeping practice among Australian Prime Ministers, compares them with their British counterparts, and provides some tentative explanations. "In Search of the Continuum: Ian Maclean's 'Australian Experience' Essays on Recordkeeping" is Frank Upward's ambitious gloss on Maclean's thought (and Australian Archives' practice) pertaining to the nature of records, record-keeping systems, and the ordering of record-keeping processes--all of which together, it is claimed, situates Australia at the forefront of current "post-custodial" archival theory, method, and practice.

Several essays on the famous Australian series system follow. First, in "The Series System -- A Revolution in Archival Control," Mark Wagland and Russell Kelly offer an introduction to this distinctive Australian construct, as distinguished from systems based on fonds and record groups, providing helpful guidance to those unfamiliar with the series system and fresh background material for those with some exposure to the literature. "The Australian ('Series') System: An Exposition" by Chris Hurley follows up by delineating the basic conceptual underpinnings of the system as it has developed in practice and could be extended in the future, showing that it can provide a valuable starting point for re-examining any number of traditional questions in archival theory and methodology. Sigrid McCausland extends discussion of the system in "Adapting the Series System: A Study of Small Archives Applications," in which she follows an overview of the general literature with brief sketches of how the system developed at Australian Archives has been applied in municipal, university, and financial organizations, noting in particular differences relating to scale, levels of funding, types and extent of documentation, and approaches to reference service. Sue McKemmish's "Are Records Ever Actual?" completes the final group of essays on the Australian system, carrying forward the conceptual sketch offered in Hurley's piece by offering a post-custodial critique of archivists' traditional concern with physicality in arrangement and description, not only in systems based on fonds and record groups but also in the Australian system itself. Though the constraints of a brief essay inevitably preclude demonstrative conclusions, this essay provides a good starting point for further exploration.

The book concludes with two useful appendices. The first offers a brief update of a bibliography of Ian Maclean's writings published some twenty years ago in *Archives and Manuscripts*. The second, an analytical and detailed survey of archival legislation in Australia, is a substantial piece in its own right, providing a fine ending to the volume. Our Australian colleagues have much to be proud of, not the least of which is this well crafted, readable, informative, and provocative book.

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