

# Letters

## A serious slur'

It is with an unwilling pen that I take issue with your correspondent Averill Edwards, President of the ACT Branch (*Incite*, no7, 1 May). My reluctance is due to an acceptance that this column should be available to members freely to express an opinion. Her letter, however, causes concern on two counts.

Firstly, doubt is cast on the professional integrity of two members of the Office Location Working Party by the inference that the views of the third member were ignored in preparing the report.

Let it be clearly understood that General Council accepted the report as the professional judgement of its compilers after seriously considering the evidence available to them. There can be no doubt of their professional competence and integrity.

Secondly, a serious slur is cast on the 1980 Executive in their decision to purchase the Sydney property. The comment that the timing of this purchase 'can only be deplored as a blatant attempt to prejudice and influence the outcome of the Working Party's investigations' is nothing short of libellous. The facts are well documented and known to those who read the Association's publicity and Executive Minutes.

A decision to purchase Sydney property was made much earlier; Head Office staff had spent much time in 1979 and in 1980 seeking a suitable property at a reasonable price; and it was expressly stated that such purchase was an investment and was not in any way to influence the Working Party's considerations.

By all means let us have constructive criticism. But please let it be informed.

*Jim Dwyer* LAA President

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## Inform unsuccessful applicants

Over several years I have been collecting data on the experiences new graduates have when seeking their first position after completion of the Diploma in Librarianship course at the University of New South Wales.

A situation which appears to be becoming more common is the failure of organisations to notify applicants who have been unsuccessful. This practice leaves the applicant in limbo to draw his or her own conclusions. It gives the new graduate inconvenience in his job-seeking activities as he doesn't know whether he should apply for other positions.

It also has a very discouraging psychological effect on a person who should be feeling and be encouraged to feel optimistic about entering his chosen profession.

Whilst I realise many organisations are anxious to cut costs wherever possible this seems to me to be a particularly unfortunate area in which to do so as it involves making things more difficult for a weaker and less vocal section of the community.

In addition I would make a personal plea to library administrators and ask them to assist their new professional colleagues in this small way even if their parent organisation does not follow a practice of notifying unsuccessful job applicants.

*Patricia Willard*

University of New South Wales

## Women in librarianship

Comments by W.H. Ifould on women in librarianship, made in 1902 and 1928, have been quoted (*Incite* nos3 and 6). The following information may be of interest.

The first woman appointed to the staff of the Public Library of New South Wales was Miss N.B. Kibble in 1899. She was a successful applicant in a Public Service Board advertisement for a junior library assistant, her signature having been taken for that of a male. Having the necessary educational qualifications and having topped the test (42 candidates), she was appointed at the male salary of £26 per annum — eight years before the 'Harvester' Award of 1907.

The Principal Librarian at the time was H.C.L. Anderson, who, impressed by the calibre of women in library work in the USA, began recruiting women to the staff of the Public Library of NSW.

W.H. Ifould was appointed Principal Librarian in 1912.

When I was appointed to the staff of the Library on 2 March 1921, with the exception of the Principal Librarian, Assistant Principal Librarian, Mitchell Librarian and two attendants, all library officers were female.

In December 1921 the first Library award was granted by the New South Wales Court of Industrial Arbitration within the Public Service (Professional Officers) Award. The few male officers were catered for in Pt. 1, Males (Permanent Officers). Pt. 2 Females (Public Library) speaks for itself. The salary range was between those of teachers and clerks.

The next award, Crown Employees (Library Officers) Award was granted in 1927. This had two sections 'Female officers' and 'Male officers'. For many years, libraries throughout Australia took this as a basis in their respective claims.

In April 1921 S.T.O. Pentelow and in December 1923 J.W. Metcalfe were appointed to the staff, but 12 years were to elapse before males began to be recruited on a regular basis.

With the introduction of the first NSW Equal Pay legislation, Industrial Arbitration (female rates) Amendment Act 1958, which came into force in January 1959, the restrictive clause militated against female librarians, who had to wait until November 1960 before qualifying under its provisions.

W.H. Ifould was a great librarian — he expected and received work of high quality from his staff; he instituted a system of in-service training and a series of grade examinations, the first of their kind in Australia; he established the first Library School in this country; he was elected the first President of the Australian Institute of Librarians, the forerunner of this Association.

*Jean Arnot*

Double Bay, NSW

## Deadly definition?

One can only laud the intention of the LAA's ABN telegram, reproduced in *Incite* (15 May 1981).

I question however, the wisdom of the inclusion of the words 'It (the LAA) therefore supports the long-term amortisation of capital costs'. It seems unlikely that a Minister of the present Commonwealth Government would assay more than one interpretation of those words.

It is even more unlikely that such a specific proposition would be viewed with equanimity, particularly as the Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment is aware of the heavy investment of private enterprise in this area.

Incidentally, is the LAA the only national organisation of its size still to send telegrams? What price the ubiquitous telex?

*Alan Bundy*

Footscray Institute of Technology

## Uneasy lies the head . . .

THOMAS JEFFERSON University Library, Philadelphia, has announced that the skull of the first known Shakespearean actor in America is now available for loan to appropriate institutions.

The skull of George F. Cooke (d1812) was given to Jefferson Medical College in 1926. The library's offer to loan the Cooke skull came in response to a request by a Temple University faculty member that the relic be available for public display at such institutions as the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Because the terms of the will of former dean at Jefferson prevent the skull from being given away, librarian John A. Timour felt that lending the skull for public display was a fair compromise — since 1930 drama societies have been trying to obtain the skull on the grounds that it was more appropriate to a theatre archive than a medical library.

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