

Nitrate film saved

An important step in the preservation of Australia's early film history has been completed at the National Library of Australia with the accessioning of the old nitrate films held in the National Film Archive. The films comprise 6850 titles totalling 8.1 million feet and include up to 2 million feet of film acquired in the Last Film Search, which is continuing.

Cellulose nitrate film stock which was used for theatrical films made before 1951 is highly inflammable and unstable and the Archive's collection is housed in a specially constructed vault in the Canberra suburb of Mitchell.

Members of the Library's Special Task Force worked for three years in the vault to accession the films, record technical details and assess generally their condition.

Mr Ray Edmondson, director of the Library's Film Section, said the work of the Task Force would be of great assistance in determining priorities for repair and preservation of the film under the nitrate copying program. Priority would be given to Australian films which made up about 70 to 75 per cent of the holdings. Australian films were given a high, medium or low priority according to their historic importance but the rate of decomposition of a film was also taken into account.



Documents and photographs from the National Library of Australia will feature in a television film retracing the flight of the KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines Douglas DC2 which won the transport section of the 1934 London-Melbourne Air Race. Mr Rob Swanenburg, a producer/director for the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation (NOS) said the material was not available elsewhere.

Photo: Mr Swanenburg (left) and cameraman Hans de Ruyter film and map of the air race in the National Library Manuscript. Reading Room.

National Library Photography by Loui Seselja

Vol II of Manual launched

The second volume of the LAA publication, *The Australian Librarian's Manual*, compiled by David J. Jones, was officially launched at the Dixon Galleries of the State Library last month.

Volume II, which is on Legislation, was appropriately launched by the Hon Justice Michael Kirby, who said that he was now entering the ranks of professional book launchers, this being the second book he had launched that day. He spoke entertainingly of the achievements of those book launchers extraordinaires, Dame Edna Everage and Gough Whitlam as well as addressing the subject of librarians and the law. The photograph on the right shows Justice Kirby, and below is David J. Jones, compiler of the book and a regular contributor to *InCite* columns through *Source*. Volume III, Glossary is in preparation and is expected to be published in 1985.



The National Library of Australia's Film Preservation Officer, Dr Henning Schou, who took part in a UNESCO seminar for developing film archives in Asia held in India in February. Dr Schou, who is President of the Preservation Commission of the International Federation of Film Archives, is seen here unravelling a 16mm film presented to the National Film Archive.

National Library Photograph

Despite staff and budgetary constraints which have limited the preservation program, 94,000 ft of film have been repaired and copied in the past year.

Under the Last Film Search the Archive acquired about 1 million feet of nitrate film in the past year and — to the delight of those concerned with preserving Australia's film heritage — it is still coming in.



Membership fees are now due!

Don't let your membership benefits slide by not renewing your membership. Fees are due by 31 March. All LAA activities and publications have a financial members' rate and a higher rate for others. To qualify for the lower rate, you must be a financial member and with the conference coming up this year, this is just one activity where you can gain.