

CONFIDENTIALITY OF LAA MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

It has always been LAA policy that membership information is not disclosed to anyone other than divisions of the Association.

While this policy is strictly adhered to by the LAA office, the Executive Director cannot guarantee that membership information is impossible to obtain, and there are a number of areas where it might be possible for information to be 'leaked'.

1. Lists of members and address labels for divisions are made available to those divisions upon request (usually in writing) from Head Office.

It is possible, however, that an office bearer may inadvertently make that information available to a third party or that the information could be made available for personal gain.

There is little the Association could do to prevent this happening other than by making sure that all office bearers are fully aware of Association policy when taking up office. This can be done by ensuring that the policy is clearly spelt out as it is in the *Office Bearers Guide* which states that 'General Council has ruled that lists and labels may not be made available for use by other organisations or individuals.'

2. Association publications contain some membership information.

The LAA *Handbook* contains a membership directory. It is because of the LAA policy that the *Handbook* does not contain full address details, however any person wishing to obtain membership details can buy a copy of the *Handbook*. It would not be difficult to put together a mailing list from the information available.

Other publications, such as directories, often contain the names of personnel together with their work address, however it is the prerogative of the person providing the entry details to select the information they wish to be included.

In no publications is there any detail provided on home addresses, except in the case of the Information Management & Consulting Group Directory where the home is being used as the business address.

Little can be done in this area other than to discontinue production of the member-

ship directory in the *Handbook*. There is no indication in directories as to whether named individuals are even members of the Association.

3. Conference/trade exhibits.

This is an area where LAA members' personal details are most likely to be disclosed, however it is not the Association which would disclose this information but the individuals themselves.

At most trade exhibits of any kind attendees are asked to fill in name and address, usually to enter a competition. In doing so they make their details available to the exhibit organiser and it is not uncommon for this information to be made available to trade exhibitors.

There is little the Association can do about this, save to warn its members that this may occur. Were the Association to refuse to allow this information to be made available to trade exhibitors, the number of exhibitors at our conferences would decrease dramatically and this would certainly be to the detriment of those attending the conference.

The solution would be to include a paragraph on this in the *Guidelines for the Organisation of Biennial Conferences*, and to require conference/exhibit organisers to include such a warning on any forms which they may be asking participants to fill in. Naturally, this does not include the conference registration form, which is for registration purposes only.

At its meeting on 7/8 December 1984 General Council resolved 'that future conference and/or trade exhibition organisers be required to place a warning to the effect that membership information may be disclosed on any forms which registrants may be asked to fill in' (GC 243/84).

CORRECTION

In the item headed Conferences Coming Up (*InCite*, March 22, p5) it was stated that one of the speakers at the 1st Asian-Pacific Special and Law Librarians Conference (1-6 September 1985) would be Dr Brian Lewis. This should of course be Dr Dennis Lewis from Aslib.

Polish library in Newcastle

Newcastle has a Polish library, in the Polish Cultural Centre at Broadmeadow.

The library contains more than 2000 books — not new ones, but books with an interesting history.

The stamps on their front pages suggest that some are from pre-war libraries probably destroyed, some accompanied Polish soldiers fighting under British command, others spent a few years behind the barbed wires of prisoners of war camps, or were sent from America to DP camps. Some of them came from the present Poland as gifts for relatives in Australia. There are many masterpieces of Polish literature; there are also books not available in the present Poland, which are of special interest to newcomers.

The books have been accumulating in Newcastle for many years and government grants have now made it possible to employ someone, under the direction of a qualified librarian, to organise the collection.

J.H. Wroblewski

Polish Library Consultant



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