

## People in Profile

### Herbert Compton



'The Quiet Achiever.' 'Nature's Gentleman'. If anyone ever deserved these titles it is Herbert Compton BA, DipLib, BLS, MLS, ALAA, Cataloguer, Darwin Institute of Technology. He was born 8 July 1936, in Gosford,

NSW, and attended Gosford High School. He obtained his BA (Hons) at the University of New England, Armidale in 1957, after which he set off to tour Europe. While overseas he worked in many and varied jobs including 15 months as Cocktail Barman, at the Connaught Rooms, Central London. Herbert says this was his best paid job.

Meeting a fellow student from Armidale who had become a librarian at Fisher Library began Herbert's interest in librarianship as a career. He went on to obtain his DipLib at the University of NSW in 1966; BLS at University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1968, and his MLS at the same University in 1973.

His particular aptitude being attention to detail, Herbert has always had a leaning towards cataloguing. He has held cataloguing positions at the University of NSW, University of Toronto, and since 1967 at the Darwin Institute of Technology (formerly the Darwin Community College). He has published some journal articles; is editor, NT Cataloguers Group Newsletter; and is state editor for NT, *Biographical dictionary of Australian librarians*. He is a member of LAA, Amnesty International, NT Council of Civil Liberties, and the National Trust.

He has twice appeared on Mastermind; in 1979 his subject was the 'European Economic Community', and in 1981 when he reached the semi finals, his subject was 'Western European Geography', concentrating on France which he chose having travelled extensively through Western Europe. He studied from the *Times Atlas* which he says is his favourite reference source, and he still uses it repeatedly.

Travel and reading are among Herbert's favourite pastimes. Non-fiction, current affairs, travel sagas and biographies interest him most. He also enjoys walking, though, of the 'evening stroll' not the 'bush' variety!

Friendships are important to Herbert and his friends come from varied occupations, and from many parts of the world. Correspondence with some friends is conducted in German, French and Spanish.

He's also interested in politics and returning to Australia after his stint in Canada meant lots of reading to catch up with the political scene in Australia (Gough's sacking, etc.). He has belonged to the Darwin Branch of the Australian Labor Party for several years. He says 'My chief concern is the preservation of the environment including, if possible, humanity'.

Despite a background of many years in traditional cataloguing, Herbert has no arguments with the new technologies. He had no major problems embracing ABN, and considers that the excellent training provided was a contributing factor.

Herbert Compton is a man with many friends and I could not imagine him with a single enemy.

Joy King

## OBITUARY

### BETTY ROTMAN

Betty Rotman, nee Perch, died very suddenly on Monday 24 February.

Betty was Head Office Librarian at BHP Melbourne, a position she had held since September 1976; she joined the company as Reference Librarian in March 1974. Prior to this, she had worked in the library of Emily McPherson College of Domestic Science, Melbourne, where she went after completing her qualifications in Librarianship at RMIT. Betty's qualification was in Computer Sciences, and with this background, she piloted BHP's library and information service into the brave new world of the 1980s. Without really realizing it, she had recently spearheaded BHP's affirmative action policy.

Betty was always active in the profession, particularly in the area of Special Librarianship. She was a familiar face at meetings and other professional forums. When comments

were called for, she always had something constructive to say, whilst the rest of us just sat there in silence. She didn't just sit and grumble about 'what should happen', she got in, usually behind the scenes, and did something about it. When I asked her a week ago how she felt about serving on the National Committee of the Special Libraries Section, she said not this year, since she would have her hands full, but next year would be fine. Betty was expecting twins in June.

Betty died so suddenly, and in such tragic circumstances, that we are finding it very hard to understand, let alone deal with. Her colleagues in librarianship, particularly in Melbourne business libraries, and those of us who were privileged to know and love her, miss her sadly.

To her husband, Jack, we send our deepest love.

Jan Durkin,  
Secretary, Special Libraries Section.

### HIGH TECH IN LIBRARY COURSE

A new syllabus which involves computer technology at all stages has been introduced for library technician students in Victoria. It has been put together by Footscray College of TAFE after an extensive survey to identify the specific tasks library technicians are now being required to perform.

Ian Rogers, Head of Footscray College's Department of Library Studies, said that in future wherever there is a library application of computer technology — such as in acquisitions, or cataloguing, students will be taught both the manual and the automated approach. He said that the progress of computers in libraries is so rapid that it is increasingly important for all workers to be familiar with computer applications.

The former Head of Footscray's Library Studies Department, Helen Smeaton, began researching the new syllabus in 1983 with the help of a grant from the TAFE Board. Libraries of all kinds were surveyed and it was established that technicians particularly needed to have keyboard and data processing skills, which have been incorporated into the new syllabus.

At Footscray College a number of software programs are being used which simulate normal library procedures. They are being run on the super mini computer VAX 11/780, through the College's Computer Centre, linked to eight Beehive terminals in the Library Studies area.

Software includes a simulated acquisition package from the National Library, and a simulated cataloguing program, Marcmain, which was developed by Kuring-gai CAE.

The College has also bought In Magic, from Triad, which is used by specialist libraries and in small business for purposes such as cataloguing, and editing reports. It is also acquiring BOOK, an Australian-written integrated library system program. In addition, students will be given demonstrations of URICA, which is used in the College's own library.

The new syllabus has been projected to cover the next five years, and already Footscray's Library Studies Department is investigating further uses of high technology in libraries including what Ian Rogers expects to be the next important development — the use of compact laser disks for storing and retrieving information.

Alix MacDonald  
Publicity Officer

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