

# IFLA at New Delhi—Ranganathan Lives!

*Margaret Shaw and Maxine Rochester had a great time there*

The 58th IFLA Conference was held at the Taj Palace Hotel Conference Centre, New Delhi, India, 23-28 August 1992 on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dr S R Ranganathan. This was the largest international conference ever staged in New Delhi, with over 1000 delegates, at least three quarters of them from outside India. There were twenty Australian delegates.

Several Australians presented formal papers: John Frylinck on a survey of user preferences for opening hours, Helen Jarvis on the bibliographic heritage of Vietnam and Cambodia, Margaret Shaw on the acquisition of Asian art materials and Esther Williams, on leave from the University of the South Pacific and taking doctoral studies at the University of Queensland, on alternatives to national libraries. Maxine Rochester, Margaret Shaw and Frances Love also gave less formal presentations to Sectional meetings. In all, around 100 papers were presented and there was a large trade display.

A recurring theme of the Conference was an assessment of the contribution of SR Ranganathan to Indian and international library development. Eric de Grolier's plenary address will be a godsend to any future library student studying Ranganathan. Much to the delight of overseas participants, our Indian colleagues got involved in robust debate and disagreement among themselves on many issues, including education for librarianship. Such passion for excellence ensures a healthy future for libraries in this country of 850 million people, with information needs ranging from basic literacy to the most complex scientific and technical ones.

For the first time since the 1984 Conference in Nairobi, Australian delegates were received by a representative of our High Commission. Brian Cummins, the First Secretary (Public Affairs) entertained us in his home together with about 20 local guests. He

also attended two of the Australian presentations the following day.

Each IFLA Conference has its own flavour and New Delhi was

The Section of Education and Training had particularly lively discussions because of the long history of library schools in India and the warmth of feeling which



*Frances Love (Australia Council), Margaret Shaw (ANG) and Brian Cummins (Australian High Commission, First Secretary, Public Affairs, New Delhi) attending Helen Jarvis's (UNSW) lecture 'Restoring the bibliographic heritage of Vietnam and Cambodia'.*

no exception. As could be expected in a country where art, design, and colour seem all pervasive, the arts had a high profile, both through the Art Section activities and in the social program. We had opportunities to visit the great sites of Delhi such as the Red Fort, wonderful museum collections such as the National Museum and the Crafts Museum, not to mention some commercial 'emporiums' which had museum displays or whose stocks constituted displays in themselves. There were also many dance and music performances which brought an added magic to the event.

The Art Section session and workshop not unexpectedly looked at Asian related collections and collecting. A slide presentation on the Australian National Gallery's Asian Art Collection was included, by invitation, in the main session together with presentations on the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Musée Guimet. It is good to see this level of recognition for an Australian collection.

library education can arouse both in the Ranganathan debate and in relation to the changing needs of libraries and changing methods of provision of training. The discussions were enriched by meetings with Indian library educators during which formal papers and informal exchange of ideas reflected the rich program available across India from the first courses started by Ranganathan in Madras in 1937 to a one year post-graduate course now available through the Indira Gandhi National Open University. IGNOU, founded in 1985, now has 10 million students nation-wide, uses radio and television teaching and provides libraries in 220 study centres as well as packages of printed, video and audio materials.

The 1993 IFLA Conference, the 59th, will be held in Barcelona from 22-28 August. The theme is the Universal Library: libraries as centres for the global availability of information. And in 1994, the 60th IFLA Conference, the first in Latin America, will be held in Havana, Cuba. ■