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AUSTRALIAN
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ARCHIVISTS Inc.

Blessed Collections

**Newsletter of the Religious Collections Special Interest
Group of the Australian Society of Archivists Inc**

Number 8 – June 2002

Notice of Annual General Meeting – 15 August 2002

The Annual General Meeting of the Religious Collections Special Interest Group will be commence at 9.00am on Thursday 15 August 2002 at the following venue:

Lochaber Conference Centre
Anderledy Lodge
80 William Street, North Sydney

Business of the meeting will include the report of the convenor and the election of office bearers for the coming year. Morning tea is included.

Following the AGM there will be a workshop focussing on the issues of disposal and access for archivists managing religious collections. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph (who operate the Lochaber Conference Centre) or the Mary McKillop Museum.

If you will be attending this meeting please indicate your intention on the ASA conference registration form, or contact Fiona Burn or Guilaine Buckley (contact details on back page of this newsletter) by Monday 5 August 2002.

Nominations for Convenor and Committee for 2002–03

Please forward nominations for convenor or membership of the committee to Fiona Burn (contact details on back page of this newsletter).

Getting to North Sydney

The meeting venue can be easily reached from North Sydney Railway Station.

If you are staying at the conference venue at Manly, and would like transport from Manly to North Sydney for the SIG meeting please contact Fiona Burn. (Depending on numbers it may be possible to arrange a mini-bus).

Blessed Collections, Number 8

Welcome to *Blessed Collections*, Number 8.

Thank you for the many comments of encouragement regarding the new format for the SIG newsletter which was revealed in the December 2001 issue. I had good intentions – but sadly not the time – when it came to the production of the promised April issue.

Thanks also to those people who have offered suggestions for content – we hope to use those ideas in this and coming issues.

We hope to see many of you at the SIG AGM at Anderledy Lodge in Sydney in August.

Denis Connor
Newsletter Editor

About members

My apologies to Brigid Cooper of the Brigidine Sisters archives in Victoria who I referred to in the last newsletter as *Sister* Brigid Cooper (and thanks to Steve Stefan for bring the error to my attention), and to Sister Carmel Hall of Mount St Canice's, Hobart, who in one place in the last newsletter was referred to as Sister Carmel *Hope*. I will try to be more careful with peoples' names!

We congratulate Kim Eberhard (who came onto the SIG committee last September) on becoming convenor of the NSW branch of the School Archives SIG earlier this year. Kim spends her time as the archivist for either Loreto College, Normanhurst or Ravenswood College – depending on the day of the week. The Schools Archives SIG's gain is our loss!

John Nimmo, convenor of the SIG from 1997 to 2001 and a committee member since last September, has indicated that he will not be available to serve on the committee after August. Thanks to John for the direction he has given the SIG over those years. We hope he will be able to continue to show an interest in religious archives and the work of the SIG.

Salvation Army archives matters

Tracy Bradford, best known within ASA circles for her participation in the Local Government Archives SIG, recently provided information about a conference hosted by the Salvation Army Eastern Territory Heritage Centre. The conference, held at the Salvation Army conference centre at Collaroy (Sydney) on 25-27 June was aimed at those working with archives and

museums within the Salvation Army. According to Tracy attendees at the conference were expected from Salvation Army heritage centres across Australia and New Zealand, and from England, Switzerland, Papua New Guinea and the United States.

Did any member of the SIG attend any or all of this conference? We would be pleased to include a report or comment about it in a later newsletter.

Religious archivists in action

Preparing and distributing the SIG newsletter has given me a terrific opportunity to touch base with the range of people who participate in the group, and to gain some appreciation of just a few of the useful initiatives that exist among archivists caring for religious collections. There are a number of groups formed on the basis of geographical location, collection type or religious denomination (and perhaps other interests) that intersect with our SIG. We can only learn and widen our professional horizons by knowing more about them.

From Tracy Bradford, for example, I have learned of the Salvation Army Heritage Centres referred to in the preceding item.

From Guilaine Buckley (Congregational Archives, Sisters of Charity of Australia) I have learned about the Sydney-based Archivists of Religious Institutes (ARI). This group meets regularly and is clearly one that provides valuable support to its participants.

And from Steve Stefan (Blessed Sacrament Congregation/St Francis' Church, Melbourne City and De La Salle College, Malvern) I have learned of the Association of Catholic Archivists (Victoria) Inc. This group has an active agenda of meetings and activities through the year. It also produces a very expertly compiled and presented newsletter – *Collective Memory* – of which Steve is the editor.

We would be delighted to hear from other regional, denominational, or other groups that might exist.

Diocesan church archives – a US model

Thanks to John Nimmo for forwarding details of the website of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York, United States. This well arranged, and well presented site – with primary headings such as *Why have archives?*, *What records are in the Diocesan archives?*, *The importance of archives*, *An outline for Parish archives*, *Historical photographs* – which might offer a useful model to others who are planning a religious archives website.

The introduction to the site opens as follows:

Churches have good precedent for preserving their records and historical materials for future generations:

- The Lord said to Moses . . they shall make an ark of acacia wood. . . and you shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. (*Exodus 25:1, 10, 16*)
- ...the ark of the covenant . . contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (*Hebrews 9:4*)

We Christians are history-centred people . . .

We hope this might entice you to take a closer look.

Obituary – Sister Leila Barlow RSCJ

The May Issue of the ASA (NSW Branch) newsletter contained the following obituary for Sister Leila Barlow, a sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart and a well known participant in ASA and religious collections activities in the Sydney area. We are pleased to reproduce this tribute to Sister Leila.

Sister Leila Barlow passed away last month. Leila Barlow was a member of the ASA since graduating from the Graduate Diploma in Information Technology (Archives) program in 1987. After an outstanding career as an excellent teacher and congregational leader, Leila went to New Zealand to shepherd a school through a difficult period, then to Taiwan, where she quickly learnt Mandarin. She was recalled from Taiwan to write the history of Kincoppal-Rose Bay school for their Centenary in 1982. Left with much documentation and many artefacts, she began to set up the Provincial Archives and hence took the course at UNSW. Always an alert, methodical worker, she continued with archival work and interests up to the last months of her life, and this in spite of increasing memory loss and diminishment. She never considered her increasing age, but was as actively interested in ASA and things archival to the end.

Newsletter by email

Following my offer in the last issue to provide the newsletter by email to those happy to receive it that way I received responses from a handful of SIG members keen to take up the offer.

The offer remains open – let me know your email address (email me at denisc@naa.gov.au) and I will add you to the distribution e-list.

Denis Connor
Newsletter Editor

Religious Collections Special Interest Group Committee

Convenor

Fiona Burn
National Archives of Australia
Locked Bag 4, Chester Hill NSW 2162
Tel: 02 9645 0110
Fax: 02 9645 0108
Email: fionab@naa.gov.au

Committee members

Guilaine Buckley
Sisters of Charity Archives
PO Box 21
Potts Point NSW 1335
Tel: 02 9356 3294
Fax: 02 9358 6830
Email: charity@maxi.net.au

Kim Eberhard
Loreto Normanhurst
(Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays)
Tel: 02 9487 3488
Fax: 02 9489 2348
Email: keberhard@loretonh.nsw.edu.au

Denis Connor
National Archives of Australia
PO Box 7425,
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610
Tel: 02 6212 3964
Fax: 02 6212 3999
Email: denisc@naa.gov.au

John Nimmo
29 Tyndall Way
Mill Park VIC 3082
Tel: 03 9609 1727 (w)
Fax: 03 9602 1558 (w)
Email: john.nimmo@dhs.vic.gov.au

End Piece

Q. Where did Noah keep his bees?

A. In the Ark-hives.

‘Archivists were invented to make accountants look exciting.’

(Reported by Shauna Hicks in her ‘In the Mailbox – April 2002’ column in the *ASA Bulletin* for June 2002 (see page 35) as having appeared in the March 2002 issue of the *New Zealand Archivist*.)