

2022 ASA CONFERENCE

The ASA conference was held from Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th of October at Realm Hotel, Barton, ACT and attended by over 430 'delegates' with around 180 being 'virtual' attendees through World Wide Web.

Preliminary to the conference was the 32nd Annual General Meeting held on Monday 17th October 2022 at the National Press Club in Barton, ACT.

Annual General Meeting

National Press Club, 16 National Circuit, Barton, ACT - Monday 17th October, 2022

Those attending the Annual General Meeting began assembling from 3pm at the National Press Club and soon renewed contact with members whom they had met at previous conferences, and met new attendees. They took the time to register their attendance both at the meeting and the conference receiving their conference 'name tags'. Nearing the 4pm start time attendees assembled in the meeting room so that the AGM could start on time as there were sub-events to follow.

The president Nicola Laurent welcomed attendees before presenting her report which covered actions of the past year including Problems, Resilience, Good work of members, Sustainability, Income stream, and plans for the new year Rules Review, Record Keeping Review, Code of Ethics.

She ended by thanking all who had helped in any way.

Other reports followed from The Council, and then positional reports from Secretary, Treasurer, and Returning Officer. Following the reports the results of elections were announced and some members were appointed to vacant positions on Council. Then the two recipients of the Sharman bursary were announced – William Shaw (NSW) and Samara McIlroy (TAS).

The President's awards were announced and recipients received their certificates.

The AGM was closed at 5.30pm to allow for the Mander Jones Awards.

Mander Jones Awards

National Press Club, 16 National Circuit, Barton, ACT - Monday 17th October, 2022

At 5.30pm Louis Trott, chairperson of the Mander Jones Committee, took the stage to announce and present the awards honouring Phyllis Mander Jones.

After an introduction explaining the awards and describing the career and life of Phyllis Mander Jones who was an early proponent of the archive profession and archives. Louise named the two judges and went through the various categories of 'published' works, announcing the recipients, and the categories where no award was made.

The presentation ended at 6pm and was followed by Welcome Reception which was a time of meeting and greeting, those in attendance taking the opportunity to renew acquaintanceships and enjoyment in a convivial manner.

Here We Are 2022

ASA Conference 2022, Hotel Realm, 18 National Circuit, Barton, ACT - Tuesday 18th October – Wednesday 19th October, 2022

The conference theme of 'Here we are' was reflected in the general topics of the first day from the 'Smoking Ceremony', 'Welcome to Country' and the first Keynote address: Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Still 'Captives of the Archives'? These together sited us in the awareness of archives telling of the past and realising the need to recognise indigenous culture as a living experience which needs to be held by the 'First Nation' rather than those who collected and stored the knowledge from their own perspective. This term 'culture' when used by non-indigenous people does not enhance the 'living' culture of insiders which belong to the indigenous 'owners' of the culture in all its manifestations. This was picked up from time to time in the Developing Practices stream and the 2nd Keynote: The Loris Williams Memorial Lecture by Rose Barrowcliffe.

The other two streams 'Practice and Identity' and 'Collaboration and Advocacy' followed the general theme as a jumping-off point developing the use of technologies and practices to widen and enhance archives as not just a collection of materials.

This theme, while covered in various presentations, was further developed for those who attended the tour to the Australian War Memorial's conservation and preservation facilities in the Mitchell area.

Trade Stands

Hotel Realm, 18 National Circuit, Barton, ACT - Tuesday 18th October – Wednesday 19th October, 2022

For the length of the conference trade representatives were present. They covered the fields of Scanning, Digital Collections Management, Archives facilitation, Outsourcing Business processes, and digitising media. The representatives were generous in their helpfulness/hospitality (time).

Tours

Australian War Memorial, Mitchell, ACT - Thursday 20th October, 2022

TH1 War Memorial Preservation Facility Mitchell

TH2 War Memorial Technology Stores Mitchell

These tours were of great interest as they covered Conservation and Preservation areas. The first tour introduced us to the Conservation areas, particularly in Art, Textiles, Documents, and Artefacts. It included displays staff had prepared for us to examine in order that we view various techniques. The Morning Tea provided was appreciated.

To help those staying in the area for lunch a map was issued showing where food places were situated. It was very helpful.

The afternoon tour of Technology Stores was spectacular in the depth and breadth of items 'in care' from motor vehicles to aircraft from World War 1 to Afghanistan - even a steam locomotive (my interest). The Afternoon Tea was again appreciated.

I am particularly appreciative of the help provided me in the way of transport to and from the facilities.

General Comments

ASA Conference: Monday 17th October – Thursday 20th October.

The Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists was held at the Realm Hotel, Canberra on Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th October 2022. It was preceded by the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Society and a number of events including a walking tour of Canberra and a number of workshops. Due to considerations including travel restrictions and availability of international transport and to enhance the international aspect, it was held in Virtual/Attendance Mode. Of the 430 delegates 250 attended in person.

Media was organised in a number of ways suited for the particular presentation so that events were in Local Time (Eastern Daylight Saving Time) to give a LIVE appearance. This was effected by media being submitted in advance but organised for a real-time appearance.

The AGM which preceded the Conference proper was organised in order that delegates were able to assemble at the meeting venue and complete registration in a convivial manner in order that there was a sense of camaraderie and like-mindedness. This enabled the formal proceedings of the meeting to be held in a way that showed cooperativity and respect for fellow delegates and those presenting the formal Reports and Motions essential for such an event. These formalities were carried out through respectful consideration and thoughtfulness as some were done on-line – a process that limited spontaneity but encouraged thoughtfulness through careful preparation before the event.

Following the AGM the Mander Jones Awards, designed to encourage archive-based publications, were presented. A general call to encourage such work was made as there were a number of areas where nominations had not been received.

This was followed by a reception to celebrate together before the Conference that was to begin the next day.

The Conference itself began on Tuesday with two ceremonies acknowledging the traditional ownership of the land by First Nations Peoples - Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country. This theme was reflected in various ways during presentations, particularly in the Developing Practices strand.

The other strands 'Practice and Identity' and 'Collaboration and Advocacy' were exhaustive and included papers that also reflected the desire to fully understand CULTURE and just what it means to different societies/cultures in terms of archives and their 'ownership'. This is a continuing discussion point for archivists and was positively examined.

During the conference a number of Trade representatives were present and generous with their promotional 'gifts' and willingness to explain their products. Also present were a number of National Archives of Australia staff with 'bags of goodies'. The NAA were Gold Sponsor of the Conference and were very generous.

A comment regarding the support. The background staff were truly appreciated whether in catering or technology. Although it is some time since I attended a conference I would consider the staff efficient and hospitable and well-appreciated by delegates.

Conclusion and Thanks

I thank the ASA for allowing me to attend as a Sharman Bursary Awardee: I appreciate its assistance.