

Treasures New And Old: the President's Summary of the Twenty-Second ANZTLA Conference, held at Trinity College, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, Australia from Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th of July, 2007.

Philip Harvey

This year's traditional pre-conference cataloguing session was conducted by Philip Harvey (Carmelite Library, Melbourne) and Helen Greenwood (John Kinder Library, Auckland). The mysterious world of liturgical cataloguing was discussed, with its vexatious rules, and in places lack of rules. Liturgical worst-case scenarios vied for our time with the copious headings for services in different traditions. At the same time, everyone was asked to consider how quickly things may change with the advent of Resource Description and Access (RDA).

Without a library a college cannot function. The Revd Peter Adam (Principal, Ridley College, Melbourne) gave the keynote address to a great "shush of librarians" (*his* compound noun) and took us on a tour of libraries small, a box of unreadable texts in the Asian desert, and great, the British Library of thirteen million books. Knowledge is public and should be, in a library. Ever mindful of scripture, he said that knowledge can puff up, while love builds up. We bring treasures to help people learn, it is about benefit for others.

This theme continued next morning. Fran Awcock (former Victorian State librarian) says we no longer live in 1917, when a *Bulletin* writer saw a woman's job in the library as floor scrubber. Equal opportunity is now a sound part of our working world. For librarians, the written word in all its manifestations is paramount. There are certain essentials of practice, with a philosophical base. It is about communication and meeting the needs of our users. Confidence is instilled through communication. We are expected to be the epitome of communication. We are responsible as librarians to encourage reading. Commitment to democratic process is part of our task. Cooperation is essential in our services. Following completion of the State Library's renovations, Fran was well-placed to be discursive about library buildings. Glass is a material that makes a collection available rather than closed off, e.g. the SLV's new glass dome. A physically comfortable environment is going to be attractive. Technology is an enabler and

After many years serving as Vice President of ANZTLA, Philip Harvey was elected President in 2007

challenger, though she also cited the existence at present of 133 million library blogs on the web. Financial, corporate and philanthropic help is increasingly necessary in the library world, so the challenge is to win friends and influence people.

Bonna Jones takes e-courses at RMIT in Melbourne and explained how a Blackboard tutorial class works. Helen Page (University of Melbourne) talked about new learning hubs. In a university the term 'hub' has become useful for explaining Information Services, where the library is one hub amongst many. Libraries are becoming more social learning spaces. Student collaborative spaces and technology are driving these design changes to our libraries. Ian Patterson talked about the projects of slv21 at the State Library of Victoria, in particular its digitising programs. Digitising has become a virtual norm in some large libraries.

That afternoon Claire Renkin (Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne) revealed some of the world of the European book arts. In one medieval illuminated medallion we saw the Christ child resting in a book, read by three adult figures – an image of the Incarnation, of the Word made flesh. Both naïve and educationally advanced, image and text push us toward the revelation that is ultimately life and mystery. Light technicians got to work, dimming and switching lights for Claire's Renaissance projections.

Delegates then went on a trip to the Middle East. Lynn Pryor (Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave) talked about going Egyptian and how to set up a library in a hot and sticky environment. She explained how to take over the Principal's office just by writing a letter. By the time she left Cairo the collection was taking shape and local staff were running things. After visits to many ancient ruined libraries

on her Pauline journeys, Ruth Millard (Ridley College, Parkville) finally showed us the Sultan's Library in Istanbul. That's the one with a roof and a book – the book being the Koran. Elsewhere we were told what early Islamists might do to a collection containing books other than the Koran: burn it down. Not that the classical approach at end of empire was any different.

Three quite different forms of current research were then divulged. Kerrie Stevens (Harvest Bible College, Dandenong North, Victoria) asked, Is theological librarianship a ministry role? In her course study Kerrie studied the literature. We have moved beyond professors or academics running a library. The librarian is seen as having a teaching role. Profession has a sense of church, theology, community and care. Ministry is a matter of calling and faith. Theological librarianship can be seen as service. It is worth considering how we might see our ministerial roles within our libraries.

Through the lens of the researcher, Judith Bright (John Kinder Theological Library, Auckland) focussed on her work with the bibliography and/or finding aid of the papers of the Anglican Bishop George Augustus Selwyn. At the start Judith estimated there were maybe 500 letters, but so far it is 2000 and accumulating. This is important research material that is used often, especially with the coming anniversary of the New Zealand Church and expectations of new New Zealand church histories.

Ian Stoodley (Malyon College Library, Gaythorne, Queensland) said that Information Technology, or IT, is "logically malleable", thus making it very hard to set down new ground rules. Because it is ubiquitous too, rules can't keep up. Ian is looking at insiders' perspectives from IT professionals on ethical practice.

On Saturday Jill Stephens (Urbis) spoke of a range of jobs in libraries and library jobs in non-library situations and organisations. All sorts of practical methods help in our work: clear the clutter, have a pattern for reading emails, keep to schedule, learn to say No, listen to the users. We can work by the Pareto Principle, i.e. the 80-20 rule: concentrate on the 20% that needs to be done now.

Margie Anderson (ALIA, Melbourne) became interested in professional development through recruiting work. It's about building up our skills set. Professional development is about achieving a successful and rewarding career. It's about longevity in the workplace. It gives us more choices and more control. Professional development is a partnership between you, your employer, and professional groups and educators; you being the most important person who drives everything. We need to figure out what we want to know more about, and what we don't know that we need to know.

The famed encyclopaedist and bibliographer Will Johnston (Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne) argued that our culture does not reverence reference. Will battles this attitude in what seems to be a life's cause. Arguments against reference are that it is too expensive; that there are too many reference works so how to choose which one; that they shrink the subject (an assumption); that they're

trivial; and that reference works encourage plagiarism. Arguments for reference are more extensive. Will said that we live in a golden age of reference, facilitated by publishers and by computers that can do massive memory work. Google, for example, is an index of reference books. We now have the best indexes, including Google, and the best books ever. The books are better and greater than fifteen years ago. Reference is revisionist, contemporary, avant-garde. Reference is now challenging thinking. Will gave several rules of thumb. He advised to find the best recent reference work on a subject, with bibliography, and stick with it. Don't quarantine reference in Reference: have extra copies in the collection. Reference books can alert you to the terms you need to search Google and other search engines. Reference books ground the internet, they are the ballast. Will asked us to have a Benedictine humility when using the vastness of Google, and to select, and to go beyond five pages. It's the same problem be it Google or a book – it's not a cognitive device. How much can we absorb? His last word: Teach the students!

Later, Kim Robinson (Moore Theological College Library, Sydney) talked about thesis collecting through TREN of Oregon. Tony McCumstie (Mannix Library, Catholic Theological College, Melbourne) talked about updates to the anztla-forum, a huge and indispensable reference work for all of us.

