

Letters

John Metcalfe

I read with sorrow in the March 5 issue of *InCite* of the death of John Metcalfe. As a student of the 'Class of 1945' at the then Public Library of NSW. I would like to point out an omission in the article by Alan Horton.

Mr Horton states that John Metcalfe was Principal Librarian of the then Public Library of New South Wales and founding Director of the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales. No mention was made of his role as founder and Head of the Library School which operated in the Public Library of New South Wales for several years in the 1940s. This Library School was the only one of its kind in Australia at that time and was attended by students from several states. The Public Library's resources were used for practical work, assignments, etc based on the classroom tuition, which was conducted in a large room on the (I think) 5th Floor.

Other well-known librarians on the staff of the School included Miss Wilma Radford (Cataloguing and Classification), Miss Jean Arnot (Periodicals), Miss Mander-Jones (Ancient Bibliography), and Mr McGreel (History of Libraries). Among other subjects taught were: Book Selection, Library Routine, Subject Headings, Reference Books, and The Book, The Library and The Reader. The names of the other teachers elude me, but I have a photograph of the staff and students taken at the end of the year function

on the roof of the Library.

The importance of this Library School lies in the fact that it was the forerunner of the one which John Metcalfe was influential in creating at the University of New South Wales. It was his experience, and that of the staff of the School – the first to establish librarianship as a profession of academic standing – which influenced the design of the syllabus of the post-graduate School at the University. It is interesting to note that, even in 1945, the majority of the students who completed the full course were, or were studying to become, university graduates.

Among the students in the full course were five from Tasmania (always a leader in the development of professionalism in public and school libraries!), namely, Beverley Bradmore, Mary Chambers, Jean Flaherty, Pat Nairn and Joan Scott (as I was then). From Melbourne came Lilian Lothian and Maureen Dunkerly, and from NSW Mavis Cribb, Mrs Bath, Misses Craig and Andrews, Larry Miller (who I believe was Chief Librarian at Newcastle and has since died), and a man whose surname was Gilbert. There was a student from Perth, WA and one or two other students whose names I can't recall. Where are they all now, I wonder?

The School conducted an abbreviated course in the first term which was attended by about 50 students. Those who qualified at the end of this course received a Preliminary Certificate in Librarianship. Those of us who completed the year's course received a Certificate of Library Training and were then qualified to sit for the Registration Examination which would entitle us to full membership of the then Australian Institute of Librarianship.

John Metcalfe's lectures on this history and development of the Library Movement, classification theory, the state of the art at the time and the philosophy of librarianship were always a delight. His deep intellect combined with wit, his 'unconventional and questioning ways' to quote Alan Horton, and his clarity of thought and expression made his lectures the highlight of our week. I remember him with pride and with gratitude for the inspiration and encouragement he gave us, as I am sure do all other students who were privileged to participate in his classes.

Joan Begg

Community Information Librarian,
Local Community Services
Association of NSW



Photograph by Alain d'Espaignet, Sydney

CHRISTINE TABUTEAU has resigned from the post of Publicity Officer at the State Library of New South Wales to take up an appointment in Melbourne. She will join the staff of the Vocational Orientation Centre as Co-ordinator of the Information Services Unit.

DIANNE REILLY has been appointed La Trobe Librarian at the State Library of Victoria, and succeeds KATHLEEN YOUNG, who retired last year. Miss Reilly's previous appointment as External Services Librarian brought her in close contact with public libraries in the State and with library networks elsewhere, and she hopes to maintain these links. Miss Reilly, co-author of a book called *Sun Pictures of Victoria*, to be published shortly, is presently working on a Masters Degree in Australian Studies at Monash.



Photograph by Alain d'Espaignet, Sydney

MARGARET COFFEY has been appointed as Staff Development Officer at the State Library of New South Wales. She previously worked with the Department of Organizational Behaviour, University of NSW, as Research Officer, and has recently completed a study of the effects of computerised networking on the quality of work life in libraries, towards her Master of Librarianship degree at University of NSW.

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