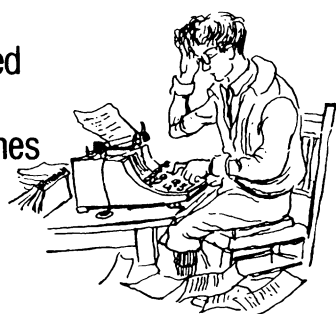


THE SOURCE

edited
and compiled
by
David J. Jones



Slanted, but not skimmed

'There does not now exist any guide to the reference materials needed specifically for the kind of reference service that the typical public library is called on to offer.' Thus firmly the authors of *Reference work in the public library* stake their claim, and with some justification. Some works which they mention are too big, or too general or too specialised to help the beleaguered reference worker answer questions like: what does 'proud as old Cole's dog' mean or what is the spark plug gap for a 1973 Ford? or what is the weather like in San Francisco in June?

In the present work the compilers, Rolland E. Stevens and Joan M. Walton, Illinois professor and practitioner respectively, provide pertinent and readable comments on 979 reference works. They naturally focus on their target readership, and American publications and interests predominate, except where landmark works (particularly transatlantic ones) are too important or inimitable to omit. So Brewer gets a guernsey; and Partridge is popped in; and a phalanx of Oxford publications (even the *Companion to law*) will be found.

Of course Stevens and Walton do much more than just provide an annotated bibliography — each of their 27 sections contains introductory comments defining the scope of the section, outlining some of the major works and the type of question they might answer. It's quite a neat format, actually. Australian librarians fielding home-grown reference questions will find *some* of the materials de-

scribed in this work helpful, especially if their readers generate a lot of queries about the United States of the 'how many US presidents had mothers who lived to be more than 80 years old?' variety.

As oft bemoaned, there is as yet no comparable Australian guide to reference work in the public library, although the AACOBs *Current Australian reference books* is a step in the right direction, together with the LAA and Pergamon offerings (see *inCite* vol 4 no 21, 9 December 1983, pages 3-4). Meanwhile, buyers expecting a well-selected and helpful reference guide with a swingeing and unashamed US slant will not be disappointed by this work.

Rolland E. Stevens and Joan M. Walton's *Reference work in the public library* was published last year by Libraries Unlimited and is priced at US\$28.50. My review copy was supplied by the James Bennett Group. (ISBN 0 87287 332 3)

Junior sources

The problem with the nine little volumes which I received for review from Franklin Watts Australia wasn't finding a suitable reviewer — I used the services of a cadet reviewer who just happened to have a little spare time after her homework.

The problem was prising the books away from her again and recording her comments. If engrossment and entertainment are criteria for successful children's nonfiction, then these have them. 'Behind the scenes' and 'Let's go to . . .' are two series of children's books, some titles being published in the United Kingdom and many (8 of the 9 I have seen) published in Australia.

In the 'Let's go to . . .' series the basic and most interesting facts about various countries are given in words and colour photographs, all in a span of 32 pages. In *Let's go to Hong Kong*, for example, the reader is shown examples of the local currency, a map of the area and of the world with Hong Kong pinpointed (rather imprecisely, unfortunately), street scenes, factory scenes, pictures of markets, buildings, people, schools, churches, dress, recreations, and a reference to the 1997 lease expiry. And there's a simple index too — my reviewer liked that. There's a lot crammed into the available space, but it's well done. The text is refreshingly unpatronising, too.

Keith Lye's *Let's go to Hong Kong*, and its

companion volumes, Geoff Burns' *Let's go to New Zealand*, Bruce Elder's *Let's go to Singapore* and *Let's go to Malaysia* are all available from Franklin Watts and cost \$7.95 each. All were published earlier this year.

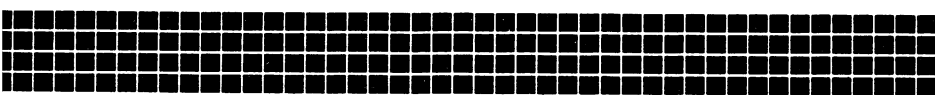
Keith Lye's *Let's go to Antarctica* is a London imprint, was published this year too, and costs the same. Incidentally from the title page of the latter I note that the series editor is Henry Pluckrose. His *Things that . . .* series published by Watts a few years ago was a great favourite of my children in their pre-school years. Seldom did we return from the library without one or two Pluckroses.

All the volumes I've seen in the 'Behind the scenes' series are from the pen and camera respectively of Susan Pepper and Chris Fairclough. The great attraction for us — I mean for my reviewer and me — of these titles is their total relevance. *Zoo* depicts Taronga Park; *Port* is the Port of Adelaide; *Hospital* is the Queen Victoria medical Centre, Melbourne; *Bakery* is the Austral Bakery, also in Melbourne. Good text. Good clear pictures. An index. A glossary of unfamiliar words or expressions. Interesting facts and figures. Cutaway drawings showing you, for example, the flour to sliced loaf metamorphosis. As a former bakery worker I can vouch for the accuracy of the information. As a librarian I liked the way the information was presented too.

Now, if I can just scribble down the ISBNs before my rookie reviewer reclaims the volumes in question . . . Susan Pepper's *Bakery* (ISBN 0 86415 008 3), *Port* (ISBN 0 86415 009 1), *Hospital* (ISBN 0 86415 010 5) and *Zoo* (ISBN 0 86415 011 3) are all in the 'Behind the scenes' series published this year by Franklin Watts Australia and cost \$8.95.

Geoff Burns' *Let's go to New Zealand* (ISBN 0 86415 000 8) was published by Franklin Watts Australiasia [sic]; Bruce Elder's *Let's go to Malaysia* (ISBN 0 86415 002 4) and *Let's go to Singapore* (ISBN 0 86415 003 2), and Keith Lye's *Let's go to Hong Kong* (ISBN 0 86415 001 6) were published by Franklin Watts Australia. Keith Lye's *Let's go to Antarctica* (ISBN 0 86313 092 5) was published by Franklin Watts in London. All these cost \$7.95.

For a full list of titles available (and it is a very full stock list) write to Franklin Watts, 1 Campbell Street, Artarmon, NSW 2064, or phone (02) 439 2355.



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