Recent retirements

Two senior and long-standing members of staff of the State Library of New South Wales have recently retired. They are John Macallister and Rose Smith.

John Ferguson Macallister (what auspicious given names for an Australian librarian!), B.A., A.L.A.A., was appointed to the then Public Library of New South Wales as a junior clerk in September 1946, during the Principal Librarianship of John Metcalfe. He progressed through the ranks steadily, gaining wide experience in the General Reference Library, the Mitchell Library, government department libraries and TAFE, becoming Acquisitions Librarian at the State Library in 1972. He had been Assistant State Librarian (Technical Services) since 1974.

John earned a reputation, entirely deserved, as a manager who got things done, involving himself closely in their achievement, but never losing sight of his (i.e. the Library's) objectives. Most recently he was heavily involved in the planning of the State Library extension, in addition to his other responsibilities for the Acquisitions, Cataloguing and Conservation departments. These were all demanding portfolios, which he did not skimp. His colleagues will miss the hard-headed, determined, but understanding contributions, especially on thorny topics, of this unassuming but greatly-respected librarian.

Rose Therese Smith, B.A., A.L.A.A., also came to the Public Library of New South Wales in the Metcalfe era, but in the following decade. She was appointed Library Assistant in July 1955, becoming a Librarian in 1960. After serving in various parts of the Library, she became Special Collections Librarian in 1971, responsible for the splendid rare books collection of the General Reference Library. Here her deep interest and significant expertise in matters bibliographical were put to full use. She was, is, and, I know, will be very active in the Bibliographical Society, and was co-author, with John Fletcher, of *A short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in libraries and private collections in New South Wales, with a list of provenances* (Sydney: Library Council of New South Wales, 1979).

From 1981 Rose was Reference Librarian, the chief librarian of the General Reference Library, a position which brought new challenges, new skills to be mastered and new approaches to be adopted. She met these challenges with distinction, and her customary modesty, gaining the respect and affection of all who came into contact with her.

David J. Jones

News items for publication in InCite should be 100–200 words long and should reach the office by the closing date listed on our deadline dates sheet.

Community language control project

The National Library of Australia applied for CEP funding for several projects in the 1984/1985 financial year. One of the most successful has been the Community Languages Control Project proposed jointly by Cataloguing and Area Studies Sections. The result has been the employment of 19 women to tackle the backlogs of cataloguing of books in languages other than English.

The Commonwealth Employment Service guidelines said that candidates should be from disadvantaged groups such as women, migrants, people with English language difficulties, the disabled, Aborigines etc. and should have been unemployed for at least 9 months. Fortunately not all these criteria had to be met in the one employee.

The successful team has a knowledge of Greek, Italian, Serbian, Croatian, Russian, French, Finnish, Polish, Thai, Lao, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Armenian, Spanish and Hebrew.

Some have difficulties with English but other team members help them out. In some cases NLA supervisors of team members can give instructions in the native languages of the project officer. This is true for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Lao but all project members are getting the opportunity to improve their English and gaining valuable experience in various library tasks such as filing, catalogue searches, descriptive cataloguing, computer data entry, computer search techniques and other skills that will help them to gain permanent employment in the future.

Our native Armenian speaker is also fluent in Spanish from schooling in Argentina. One Serbian speaker is fluent in Italian and Greek and also has a good command of French. Our Hebrew speaker lived on an Israeli kibbutz after education in Latin America. She was able to borrow a Hebrew typewriter from the local Jewish community and has completed a list of the library's Hebrew collection. She can now turn to the huge backlogs of books in Spanish and Portuguese.

Only one member has resigned. Other projects have been less fortunate which results in a heavy training burden on supervisors. We in Cataloguing and Area Studies will be very sorry to see our teams go at the end of the project.

Pauline Haldane
Principal Librarian, Area Studies (NLA)