

## Heritage Week — April 13 — April 20

# Family trees are flourishing

There was a time when tracing your family history was something most Australians preferred not to do. You never could tell what kind of shady ancestor you might turn up, to add to any skeletons in the cupboard you already knew about.

And then, in the 1960s, attitudes began to change. Perhaps by then there was a comfortable length of time between us and the contacts. Nick Vine Hall of the Australian Society of Genealogists believes that it was the beginning of the planning for the Cook Bicentenary in 1970 that sparked it all off. Certainly found that time membership of the Society began to increase noticeably. People wanted to know about their backgrounds — and those who found a convict among their ancestors felt a certain pride, whereas, a generation before, their parents might have decided to keep quiet about it.

Until that time, the Society, which was founded in 1932 remained a comparatively small organisation. But the growing interest of Australians in the history of their country and their families soon showed up in an increase in the Society's membership — helped along the way by radio programmes such as City Extra in which Phillip Geeves had regular sessions simply answering the kinds of questions ordinary people asked.

And this is what the Society of Genealogists does — every year thousands of people want to trace their origins, and the library and staff of the Society are geared precisely to cope with that. The Society's first full time director, Nick Vine Hall, was appointed in 1978, and it has been since then that the Society has seen its dramatic increase in membership. It now has more than ten thousand members. David Weston, librarian of the Society of Australian Genealogists takes up the story:

The Society of Australian Genealogists is a non-lending resource centre and reference library specialising in materials relating to the study of genealogy and family history, in the wider context of Australian history. Membership of the Society has grown from 6 in 1932 to 10,000 individual and institutional members in Australia and overseas. It is now the largest society of its kind.

The Society collects by both donation and purchase, published works, original manuscript and photographic material useful in the study of family history. The Society's Library Collection of printed volumes, records on microform, and the Primary Records Collection,



form the most comprehensive repository of genealogical reference material in Australia, outside official Government collections. For more than fifty years the Society has preserved many records which would have otherwise been lost. Our collections are widely used as a major reference source for

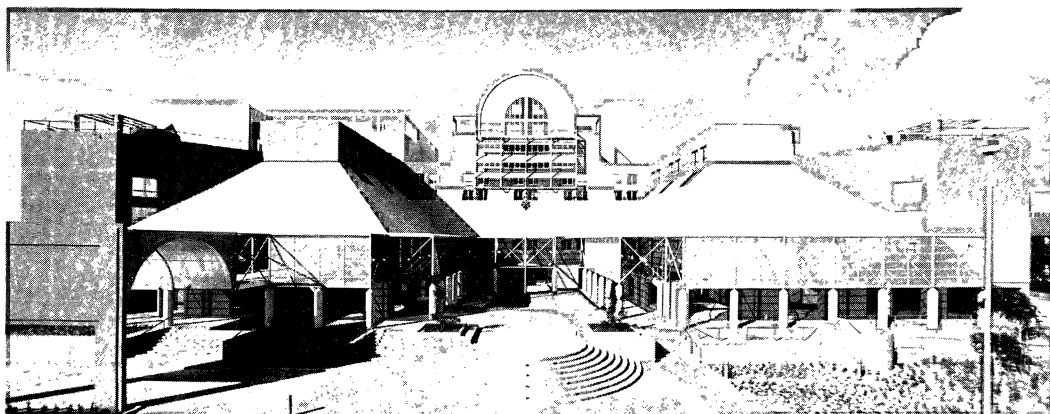
genealogical, biographical and sociological research purposes.

In December 1977, the Society moved to its present headquarters at Richmond Villa on Observatory Hill, Sydney. In his Annual

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to page 9**



## It's at the Beaufort



**The Beaufort Hotel and Darwin Performing Arts Centre is the major venue for the Darwin LAA Conference. The Beaufort Hotel has just opened and the Performing Arts Centre awaits its official opening.**

Architecturally unique among Australian hotels, the Beaufort was designed by Kerry Hill in post-modern style. The luxuries, the

refinements and all the personal finishing touches demanded by a five-star hotel are there but with an individual quality that reflects the special character of the Northern Territory.

The Beaufort offers luxurious comfort, with 235 rooms and a great range of restaurants and bars. There's Edo, a superlative Japanese restaurant; Sigg's, an intimate haven for superb food and service; Cafe Esplanade, cas-

**continued on page 2**



## — the bottom line

We and they, them and us;  
Point the finger, make a fuss;  
Pull apart and not together —  
Enough! Do you wonder whether  
We will even have a future  
If our own we cannot nurture?

Okay, you may think it's doggerel. But the point is not trivial. Your peripatetic President is picking up negative attitudes towards the LAA as a whole and towards individual members. Current demands on our time and energy are quite enough without further dissipation into personal bickering.

Librarianship is a service profession. Our function is to meet the needs of those who fund us. And since we usually spend tax-generated revenue to provide our services, we are publicly accountable for our actions.

How then can we impart to our customers the confidence to expect or request our assistance if we do not have confidence in our employers, our Association, our colleagues, or even ourselves?

We all like to be considered 'professional' — indeed we've even constructed an objective test for determining which members meet the 'professional' criterion. Whilst such fine discrimination might have been necessary in the bad old days when we struggled for credibility and sought respectability through standards and qualifications, times have changed.

Our customers now pronounce on our professionalism. And they judge us by our actions. If the service is good, it's professional; if it's bad, it's amateurish.

Amateurs snipe at their Association without bothering to understand its operational constraints. Amateurs take pot shots at their employers and at each other without acknowledging their inter-dependence. Amateurs are blind to the significance of the only activity which really counts — individual or collective service provision.

Try not to be an amateur. Don't tell me that your qualifications and experience are better than mine, or hers, or his. So what? I'm much more interested in what you do and how well you do it. Do you create goodwill or trauma with your customers? Do they keep coming back, and do they bring their friends? Do you rate as an ambassador or as an apologist for librarianship?

And what if you speak as an organisation rather than as an individual? Are you mindful of the objectives of the institution and attentive to the needs of your supporters? Are you prompt and efficient in disseminating and assimilating information? Is your own house in order — or do you find it easier to identify disorder in others?

Right now it's appropriate to consider the basics: managers manage; librarians serve; and Associations cater to the needs of all their members.

Doggerel?

*Ian McCallum*  
President

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## DARWIN CONFERENCE

Continued

ual brasserie-style chic; the Take Away shop for meals in a minute.

The Darwin Performing Arts Centre is an integral part, architecturally at least, of the larger Darwin Centre which comprises the Beaufort Hotel, office block and convention centre. The Centre, with a 1070 seat play house and 250 seat open space theatre, will be home for most performing arts events in Darwin.

All keynote addresses will take place in the Performing Arts Centre, as well as several other large functions such as the James Bennett lecture by Thomas Keneally. The large exhibition, which is shaping up to be exciting and futuristic, will span two floors of the Beaufort Centre.

Three other venues for the conference are spread within a one kilometre radius of the Beaufort Centre — the Sheraton Hotel, the Travelodge and the Hotel Darwin Convention Centre. Most of the concurrent sessions and AGM's will be at these locations. All are within short walking distance of the tropical Centre Mall and shopping area, and are flanked by shady parkland and Darwin harbour views.

In future editions of *InCite* we will be highlighting a selection of the conference speaker and their papers, together with more information on the exciting exhibition. Meantime, note about the printing of our programme and registration form. Unfortunately the price quoted for the Social Programme are different on the grey coloured registration form for the white coloured Programme Brochure. Please use the prices quoted on the white Programme Brochure in all cases.

*Janet Martini*  
Publicity and Public Relations

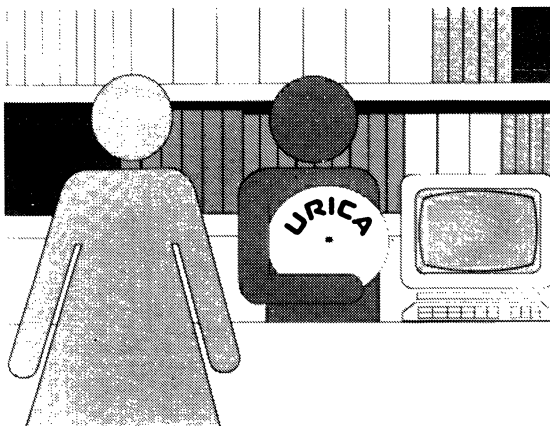
# URICA. Simply the best library computer system ever invented.

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## Library management with improved control

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