



# THE SOURCE

## Read first, browse later

Tom and Wendy Whitton's *Inside Sydney's Bookshops* was a pioneering and very useful evaluative work on the respectable array of booksellers that this city had to offer in the early 1970s. The Whitton tome had the distinction of being banned for a time by one bookseller, who didn't like the way a particular shop was described. Now another no-doubt footsore author has done the rounds of Sydney's libraries, describing each shop's services, specialisations, special features and shortcomings, in a breezy, readable style.

Christine Flynn's *Bookshops of Sydney*, published earlier this year by Primavera Press, is a guide to over 400 shops, ranging from the large generalists to the tiny specialists. There are historical, and from what I know of the subject, accurate historical notes on some of the bookshops' founders, such as Dymock, Angus, Robertson, Tyrrell, Jim Thorburn, and the Abbeys. Addresses, phone numbers, hours, nearest cross streets, manager's names, bus route information, nearest railway station, nearest ferry — all the information you need to write to them, talk to them or to get to them. There is an index by specialty (where would you get books about jewellery?), a list of bookshops with staff who speak languages other than English (from Afrikaans to Yiddish), a suburb index, and a list of shops with extended opening hours. Christine Flynn seems to have thought of everything the would-be browser needs.

I do think there might have been a few cross-references in the single A-Z listing of shops (there is no name index and, incidentally, no pagination). The State Library of New South Wales interim shop takes a bit of finding under 'L', as does the Art Gallery shop under 'G'.

Don't let me put you off. Christine Flynn's *Bookshops of Sydney* is a splendid, informative, fair and entertaining reference work. Buy it, get out your comfortable browsing shoes and start to rediscover Sydney's surprising bookshops. (ISBN 0 9589434 3 5). **Note:** A package of *Bookshops of Sydney* with *Libraries of Sydney* is available from the LAA for \$20 (plus \$2 postage) or copies of *Bookshops* are available for \$14.95 plus \$2 postage.

## Digging around

The merits of AESIS (Australian Earth Sciences Information System) will by now be well-known to users of its online and printed manifestations.

But AESIS, produced by the Australian Mineral Foundation, has more nuggets than this to offer. There is for example the series of *AESIS special lists*, (ISSN 0157-9002) the seventeenth of which has come into my possession. This is a 172-page annotated listing of publications of the BMR — the Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics — between 1975 and 1984. There are the sophisticated indexes we have come to expect from AESIS: stratigraphic, mine, deposit, well, author, map reference, locality, and subjects, from the Canberra Graben to the Melbourne Trough.

Further information about AESIS and its gems is available from the Information Services Manager, Australian Mineral Foundation, Private Bay 97, Glenside, SA 5065.

## Look it up

There is no easy answer to the age-old question 'Which dictionary would you recommend?' A useful little work published last year by the American Library Association describes and evaluates seven 'college-level' and nine 'other' desk dictionaries of the American (and in some cases English) language.

Robert M. Pierson's *Desk dictionaries: a consumer's guide* is a readable and sensible booklet, giving due emphasis to the criteria by

which a good reference person, or indeed any good consumer of reference material, would judge a potential purchase. The American origins of this work make it less useful for the Australian library shelf, although some of the products described are of course available locally.

Robert M. Pierson's *Desk dictionaries* was published in 1986 by ALA and costs US\$2.95. My review copy was supplied by Bennetts Library Services. (ISBN 0 8389 3316 5)

## When disaster strikes

A welder sets your air-conditioning system on fire. A plumber turns on your new sprinkler system and the supply pipe comes adrift. Demolishers deposit dust where you least expect it. Your disaster reaction plan swings into action — or does it? Well, if it doesn't, or if you could benefit otherwise from the experience of other librarians who have faced up to all kinds of disasters — apart possibly from plagues of frogs and boils — you may find *Disaster planning for libraries* useful.

This is a 156-item, partly annotated bibliography compiled by James Sinclair and John Carpenter of the State Library of NSW. This library has a thorough disaster plan in place, and staff found many of the items in this bibliography extremely useful when the plan was formulated. Published earlier this year by the State Library of NSW as a Research Service Information Guide, *Disaster planning for libraries* is available gratis from the Education Officer, SLNSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. (ISBN 0 7305 3791 9)

## In brief

• *Library hi tech bibliography* is a new annotated guide to books, serials, articles and other resources on 'the critical issues of automation and technology facing today's librarians and information specialists'. Promised for publication every year or 18 months, this work will consist of a score of topical bibliographies — volume 1, which appeared in 1986, dealt with barcoding, cable tv, disaster preparedness, laserdiscs, OPACs, LANs, retrospective conversion and other wonders of the modern library world.

Volume one of *Library hi tech bibliography*, published by Pierian Press, costs US\$39.50. (0 87650 219 2)

• 'Common Thread' was a multicultural arts project which employed seven women from different cultural backgrounds to practise traditional arts and crafts in the Richmond and Collingwood area. Initiated and administered by Carringbush Regional Library, the project ended up doing a lot more than that, as can be gleaned from a report on the project published by the Library.

*Common Thread* is available from Carringbush Regional Library, 415 Church Street, Richmond, Vic 3121. (No ISBN)

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