

# The Source



David J Jones

**How many trees... will be saved by rational application of the principles in this book?**

## VIDEOS

Highest quality titles selected from over 60 major distributors and independent producers especially for

- Secondary Schools
- Tertiary Institutions
- Public & State Libraries
- Government & Private Collections

for Free Catalogue & Alpha Index  
**008 249 786 or (02) 979 5655**  
or Fax (02) 997 8016

**Maxwell's Video Collection**

IT IS SOBERING to glance through *Threatened species in Australia*, and to contemplate the 400 or so species for which time is running out. In their recent 3000-item bibliography, Kevin P Slattery and Robert L Wallis cover references to rare, endangered and vulnerable Australian flora and fauna, based on a database maintained at the Rusden Campus of Victoria College. About 80 publications are regularly scanned for the database, which also contains a number of references to monographs. Entries are arranged alphabetically by the name of the unfortunate plant or animal, from Abbott's Booby, which has been the subject of a Senate Committee, no less, to the Zieria, an 'extinct' plant which has been rediscovered. The listings of scientific names and subject headings make this very easy to find your way around. This is a useful publication, with no pretensions to total comprehensiveness. The print version costs \$23.00 and a floppy disk version, using INMAGIC software, costs \$65.00. Kevin P Slattery and Robert L Wallis' *Threatened species in Australia: a select bibliography* is a joint publication of the Department of Science Applied Australian Ecological Research Unit and Victoria College Library. Copies are available, post-free, from Mr R Holmes, Department of Science, Victoria College, Rusden Campus, Clayton, Vic 3168. (ISBN 0 949827 18 5)

### Local studies guidelines

*Guidelines for a local studies collection policy for Victorian public libraries* is a useful document produced in 1989 by a group of reference librarians to help their organisations develop their own policy to suit local needs. Goals, definitions, organisation, preservation, staffing, funding and publicity are some of the topics touched upon in this 5-page document. Copies are available from the Reference Librarians' Cooperative c/o Jane Wilson or Diane Bamba at Eastern Regional Libraries, 511 Burwood Highway, Knoxfield, Vic 3181. (No ISBN)

### Dem bones, dem bones

*Recovering the tracks* is a far from dry account of the history of Australian archaeology, from Dampier's digging around the debris of some campsites in 1699 to the present. Including extracts from the writings of archaeologists, amateur and professional, David Horton's

book traces the development of classic archaeology, and the watershed discoveries at Lake Mungo in 1969, which led to the rewriting of Australian prehistory. There are useful pen portraits of leading figures in the field, maps, charts and illustrations, knitted together with a lively text which is comprehensible to the layperson. But why, oh why, is there no index to the 360-page work? David Horton's *Recovering the track: the story of Australian archaeology* was published in 1991 by the Aboriginal Studies Press, and costs \$22.95. (ISBN 0 85575 221 1)

### More than they are entitled

Here's a couple of publications which actually provide more than their rather prosaic titles imply—often it's the other way round, at least to a jaded Sourceperson. *Who's who in Canberra* and *Who's who in Waverley* (Victoria, that is) do more than list the local potentates and their consuming interest in indoor bare-back riding and underwater cycling. Both were produced in association with local chambers of commerce, and list local charitable, sporting and other special-interest organisations, select local businesses, local government representatives and officers, schools, colleges, universities, libraries, justices of the peace and much more. There are calendars of local events—including when your fourth and final rate notice will become due, and other cheering information. There are lists of acronyms and abbreviations. For Canberra there is a very useful list of named Australian Capital Territory buildings and their street addresses. And of course the Canberra volume pays close attention to the inhabitants of that House on (and under) the hill. These are very well-organised compendia, offering substantially more than their titles promise, and in the case of the Canberra volume, of much more than parochial interest. Will the percipient browser detect the methodical and intuitive hand of a librarian in these works? *Who's who in Canberra*, third edition, (ISSN 1032-710X; priced \$51.00 post-free) and *Who's who in Waverley* (ISBN 1036-5923; \$57.00 post free) are available from CESL Support Services, PO Box 21, Torrens, ACT 2607, phone (06) 285 3577 fax (06) 290 1233.

### Stacks of laughs

'Library stuff ain't very funny,' was Art Plotnik's admonition to budding library humorists a few years

ago. Remembering this, I approached *A funny thing happened on the way to the school library*, all 204 pages of it, with mixed feelings. And this treasury of 'anecdotes, quotes and other happenings' is a mixed bag. There are some classics, such as 'The Old Librarian's Almanac' ('Let no Politician be in your Library... it will be difficult for him to observe Silence, and he is objectionable otherwise, as well.') There are some clever derivatives ('The Library Card: membership has its privileges.') And there is the 'Go placidly amid the shelves and carrels' version of desiderata, 'found posted to the workroom wall in an Australian school library circa 1973.' Some of the stories and jokes are pretty yawnish, but some might raise a smile at a sedate seminar. A number of the quotations are fairly telling, however, and the section dealing with selection and censorship is sobering. There are some laughs to be had in these pages, if you can be bothered to dig for them. Larry A Parsons' *A funny thing happened on the way to the school library* was published in 1990 by Libraries Unlimited, and costs US\$17.50. My review copy was supplied, with a friendly smile, by James Bennett Library Services. (ISBN 0 87287 751 5)

### Keeping it simple

There has been good progress in the war on officialese and gobbledegook, especially since the Commonwealth Government's Plain English and Simpler Forms Program began in 1983. Writers may remember Barbara Walsh's useful booklet *Communicating in writing*, which AGPS Press published in 1986, reprinted in 1987, and updated in 1989, which is still selling well to people who realise it is 'the writer's responsibility to be clear, not the reader's responsibility to understand.' *Writing in plain English*, by Robert Eagleson, is another valuable contribution, and can be used as an instructor's handbook for training courses, or by individuals as a self-instruction manual. Eagleson describes the benefits of Plain English, with some stunning examples of how not to write, as well as how to write. There is advice on planning and organising documents, better ways of using language, designing and testing documents, including forms, and five realistic exercises for you to work through. How many trees and megalitres of ink will be saved by rational application of the principles in this book, let alone the frustration

and misinformation which will be avoided, even if official writers do no more than use the six pages of plain English alternatives at the back of the book. *Writing in plain English*, by Robert Eagleson, was published in 1990 by AGPS Press and costs \$16.95. I'm plainly impressed. (ISBN 0 644 06848 5)

### 200 years of women's writing

Debra Adelaide's *Australian women writers: a bibliographic guide* (London: Pandora Books, 1988) has been a very useful publication, containing outlines of the lives and works of about 450 writers. Adelaide's follow-up work, *Bibliography of Australian women's literature*, provides bibliographic coverage of 3828 Australian women writers, from 1795 to 1990, who have penned a total of 11,560 titles. Unlike her earlier work, this bibliography does not include biographical notes, but does give dates of birth and death, where known. Adelaide also supplies cross-references from pseudonyms and maiden names, where she has been able to track these down. Entries are alphabetical by surname, of course, with each entry divided into fiction, non-fiction, poetry and 'other.' For some authors the location of their manuscripts is provided, as are references to further sources of information. Appended are checklists of playwrights, fiction, non-fiction, children's and general authors.

This is a very valuable piece of work, truly 'the most comprehensive bibliography ever compiled of Australian women's writing from the earliest Colonial times to the present.' Debra Adelaide's *Bibliography of Australian women's literature 1795-1990* was published by DW Thorpe in association with the National Centre for Australian Studies in 1991, and is available from the publisher at \$55.00 post free. (ISBN 0 909532 90 7)

### The management of challenge

Or perhaps it should be the challenge of management. Certainly strategic planning, program budgeting and its variants, performance appraisal and output measures, marketing, award restructuring and the like affect us all, to a greater or lesser extent. In 1990 Auslib Press published a collection of essays on some of the issues facing the contemporary library manager, under the title *Challenges in Australian library management*, and this collection is well worth reading, or re-reading.

Intended for practitioners wishing to extend or update their knowledge, as well as for students of library and information science, this work provides a gentle introduction to a range of vital topics. Ida Vincent provides some pertinent questions and sensible answers in the area of strategic planning, and there is a case study on the Australian War Memorial's corporate plan. Due attention is paid to the evaluation of performance of services and of individuals, accompanied again by some case studies. There is an easily-digested section on marketing, and there is stimulating, but not of course exhaustive, treatment of issues such as industrial democracy, award restructuring, job satisfaction and industrial relations generally. The work is rounded off with mercifully select and annotated lists of further reading.

*Challenges in Australian library management*, edited by Maxine K Rochester and Fay Nicholson, was published in 1990 by Auslib Press, and costs \$28.00 plus \$4.00 postage. (ISBN 1 875145 07 9) □

[Items for review in *The Source* should be sent to: David J Jones at 31 Ward Street, Willoughby, NSW 2068.]

## Nominations for Fellowships

The Australian Library and Information Association may confer the distinction of Fellowship of the Association on an Associate (professional) member who has made a distinguished and sustained contribution to the theory and/or practice of librarianship. Nominees normally must have at least 8 years' standing as a professional member of the Association.

Nominations for Fellowship may be submitted by professional members or Divisions of the Association. They should be supported by details of the following: nominee's achievements and leadership in librarianship or archives administration; contribution to the objects and work of ALIA; publications on bibliography, librarianship or archives, and/or conduct of research or development in librarianship or archives. Nomination forms are available from the **Membership Services Manager, Australian Library and Information Association Office, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2600**

Members should note that any recommendations for Fellowships must be made in strict confidence. Failure to comply with this requirement will jeopardise the nomination. Nominations should reach the ALIA office by 1 June 1992.