

Archiving Australian Judaica

Marianne Dacy, University of Sydney

The archive of Australian Judaica was established at the University of Sydney Library in July 1983 with a grant from the Australian Research Grants Committee. From the outset, the central purpose of the archive has been to draw together and preserve in one centre, the physical resources for research on the history, structure and concerns of the Australian Jewish community. In addition, the archive was established to prevent the eroding and further loss of records of the Australian Jewish community, through want of a systematic collection policy.

Dr Neil Radford, the university librarian and Professor Alan Crown, head of the Semitic studies department, are the project directors of the archive and determine its policy. Its day to day activities, running and translation of policy into action are the responsibility of Marianne Dacy, the archivist/librarian.

The greater portion of the holdings date from the period of World War II. Research which is supported from this material is broad based, falling within the realms of demography, history, econom-

ics, international relations, law and politics, and embraces any research field where there is a legitimate concern about minority reactions and roles in the community.

This collection consists of the papers of some sixty individuals active within the Australian Jewish community, as well as the archives of over thirty Australian Jewish organisations. Also housed in the archive are over 400 tapes of interviews of Holocaust survivors, an ephemera collection, current Australian Jewish periodicals, subject files for easy reference, a collection of Australian Yiddish writings and a photograph collection. A catalogue of this material is published bi-annually.

The records are being collected through personal contacts with individuals and organisations, and some

material, such as early Australian Zionist material was filmed after visits to the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. The main Australian Jewish newspapers have been filmed, with the collaboration of several State libraries, and individuals. Some runs had to be assembled from several locations because of the fragmentary state of the records.

Students writing theses for higher degrees in Australian, interstate and overseas universities, authors, radio and television writers, bibliographers and other researchers also make use of the archive. The university library provides the infrastructure for the archive, and covers overhead costs such as photocopying, computer support and correspondence, while the archivist's salary is provided by the Mandelbaum Trust. Additional finance for microfilming and publications comes from generous donations from the 'Friends of the archive'.



Marianne Dacy with some of the collection



Keeping the archive going... Hugh McCredie, a Mandelbaum trustee (second from left) presents a cheque on behalf of the trust to Dr Neil Radford. Also present were (l-r) Marianne Dacy, Lia Freidler, a director of Mandelbaum House and Professor Alan Crown head of the Semitic Studies department