

• **12/5-8/12 Qld Library Technician section meetings.** State Library of Qld, Metway Theatre, 5.30pm (unless advised otherwise). (12/5; 16/6; 14/7; 11/8; 8/9; 13/10; 10/11; 8/12). Contact: Ailsa O'Donnell, ph (07) 3259 3025, fax (07) 3259 3084.

13-14/5 ABN Supersearch Training. QUT Library. Contact: Barb Ewers, ph (07) 3864 5183, fax (07) 3864 1823, b.ewers@qut.edu.au. Further courses on demand, register interest with Barb Ewers.

15/5 ABN Basic Inquiry Training. QUT Library. Contact: Barb Ewers, ph (07) 3864 5183, fax (07) 3864 1823, b.ewers@qut.edu.au. Further courses on demand, register interest with Barb Ewers.

• **19/5 Qld Branch Council meeting.** QUT Library, Kelvin Grove Campus, Room D301. 5.30 for 6pm. Contact: Robyn Gattera, Secretary, ph (07) 3403 5938, fax (07) 3366 7903.

24-26/6 Insearch/Knight-Ridder Information seminars. Market Intelligence (24/6), Introductory DIALOG (25/6), DataStar/ProBase (26/6 am). Brisbane contact: (02) 9212 2867, krinfo.aus@uts.edu.au.

26-28/5 ILANET Courses — Introductory Course (26/5), Searching Australian Databases (27/5), ILANET Seminar (27/5 — Free), ILAMAIL 5.2 Seminar (28/5). Course outlines and bookings phone 1800 801 659. ilanet@ilanet.slnsw.gov.au.

SA

5-7/5 ILANET Courses — Introductory Course (5/5), Searching Australian Databases (6/5), ILANET Seminar (6/5 — Free), Searching International Databases (7/5), ILAMAIL Seminar (7/5 — Free). Course outlines and bookings phone 1800 801 659. ilanet@ilanet.slnsw.gov.au

• **3/7-4/12 SA Health Libraries section general meetings dates** (3/7; 9/9; 5/11 — Conference report; 4/12 — AGM). Meetings are held at SAHC at 1pm. To add items to the agenda or for apologies contact: Juliet Marconi, secretary, ph (08) 8226 8157, or Anne Fricker, president, ph (08) 8222 3224.

17-18/7 Winning Package workshops, conducted by Meg Paul of FLIS. Ira Raymond Room, Barr Smith Library, Uni of Adelaide. 9.30-5pm. \$200 ACLIS members, \$250 ALIA members, \$300 non-members. For further information contact: P Hawke, Executive committee secretary, ACLIS (SA), ph (08) 8308 4064, fax (08) 8303 4369, phawke@library.adelaide.edu.au

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Bridging the gap between scholarly and general publishing

Ray Choate, University of Adelaide Library

Working at a university amongst a community of scholars it soon becomes apparent that there is a considerable amount of research material which does not readily find a means of publication in book form. Academic, scholarly publishing of monographs in this country is not a part of the information explosion, except perhaps some textbooks or general texts with broad appeal. Due largely to the reduced purchasing power of university libraries, print runs of many academic books are becoming smaller and smaller, with a commensurate increase in copy price. Electronic publishing is by its nature more suited to journal and short articles rather than to publication of monographs. Commercial publishers are not interested in publishing books which do not have the prospect of being financially viable or profitable. And, yet, the information and scholarship being produced is of considerable interest and value.

With this in mind, the University of Adelaide Library decided in 1996 to establish the Barr Smith Press which would undertake to publish scholarly works deemed to be important, but which would not be likely to attract a commercial publisher because of their limited market potential. It was also decided that the books should be of high standard, suitably printed and bound, but not artificially limited editions aimed primarily at the collectors of books. At the same time, it was considered important that the subject matter should, when possible, appeal to the general public as well as scholars. This was a practical decision to encourage sales in order to cover the costs of publication and distribution, and also a deliberate attempt to bridge the gap between the academic and the general community.

In considering the name of the press we were concerned to honour the Barr Smith family, who were early benefactors of the University of Adelaide; their gifts not only helped to establish the collections of the library but also funded the construction of the Barr Smith Library itself, a magnificent neo-classical building which now serves as the main reading room of the university library. It was thus fitting to name the press after the original library and the family who gifted it; it is doubly so when one learns that Robert and Joanna Barr Smith were themselves great readers and that grandchildren like Christine (Macgregor) were significant collectors.

When we were offered the manuscript on the life and letters of Robert and Joanna Barr Smith, it was appropriate that this

should be our first major monograph. The letters were edited by Fayette Gosse, a graduate of this university who married a great-grandson of Robert and Joanna. Mrs Gosse spent long hours in the Mortlock Library of the State Library of South Australia copying the letters deposited there. She also had access to papers and letters which are still in the private possession of members of the family. Her book interprets the letters in the context of the local community, and the result is a fine publication of family history combined with a social history of South Australia and Adelaide of the late nineteenth century. [*Joanna and Robert; the Barr Smiths' life in letters, 1853-1919.* Fayette Gosse. Adelaide, Barr Smith Press, 1996.]

The second publication of the Barr Smith Press is a reprint of an early book of poetry by Fidelia Hill; published in 1840 it was the first book of poetry by a woman published in Australia and also the first book of poetry by a South Australian. The reprint has an introduction by Dr Philip Butters of the English Department at the University of Adelaide, and makes available again this now extremely scarce monograph. [*Poems and recollections of the past.* Fidelia Hill. [Facsimile edition edited and with introduction by Philip Butters.] Adelaide, Barr Smith Press, 1996.]

In looking to the future, while being both intrigued and stimulated by the possibilities of electronic publishing, the Barr Smith Press is likely to continue with the more traditional publishing format (print-on-paper). At the same time we will keep our options open concerning any opportunities which arise that are appropriate for electronic publishing either as a CD-ROM or on the Internet. We must also come to terms with the complications of being a small publisher in a remote area, the consequent difficulties of marketing and distribution, and the competition to obtain grants, subsidies and reviews.

Starting a private press at this time — when the purchasing power of libraries is being progressively eroded, when other university presses are closing or narrowing their field of operations, and when the thrust of government and institutional funding is towards an 'information technology' vision of society — might be seen as a quixotic venture. However, we believe that small presses such as ours can make a useful contribution to scholarly communication, and so long as we can cover our costs, we plan to continue to publish one or two new books each year. ■