

Librarian leaves international legacy

Andrew Delbridge Osborn, 14 September 1902 – 22 April 1997

Andrew Delbridge Osborn, a librarian who served institutions in the United States, Australia, and Canada, died on 21 April 1997, in the Liberty Commons nursing home in Chatham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA. He was 94 and lived in Harwichport, Massachusetts.

Born on 14 June 1902, in Launceston, Tasmania, Dr Osborn spent many years in the United States and Canada before returning to Australia from 1958 to 1962 to direct the library at the University of Sydney.

Dr Osborn's library career began during his undergraduate studies at the University of Melbourne, where he served as cadet to senior cataloguer in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library and was a key participant in that library's move to Canberra in 1927. He received his BA (Hons) from Melbourne in 1925 and his master's in 1927. Dr Osborn then moved to the United States, where he earned a PhD in Philosophy from Columbia University in 1934. During his doctoral studies he worked as a general assistant at the New York Public Library.

In the 1960's, Dr Osborn discovered a first edition of the *Principia* annotated by Newton himself. This work is now part of the rare book collection at the University of Sydney. For his dedication to obtaining resources for Australian libraries, Dr Osborn was awarded the Order of Australia in 1986. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Sydney in 1978 in recognition of his work and contribution to the development of Australian university libraries.

During his career, Dr Osborn published many works on librarianship. He is best known for his 1955 book, *Serial publications*, which went into three editions. He is also remembered for his 1938 English translation of *The Prussian instructions*, a seminal work in library cataloguing.

However, his most influential publication was probably his 1941 paper *Crisis in cataloging*, where he outlined his recommendations for streamlined library cataloguing based on records created at a central outside resource. At that point, records of books were largely created in individual libraries, duplicating effort and often resulting in a large backlog of inaccessible material. This paper presaged some of the problems of today's information revolution and made concrete suggestions that libraries now use to deal with the vast quantities of material they receive.

Following his Directorship of the University of Sydney library, Dr Osborn returned to the United States to become a professor at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Library and Information Science, where he stayed until becoming Dean at Western Ontario. In 1970, Dr Osborn retired to Sydney, where he operated O.P. Books, an out-of-print book service. His health deteriorated in 1993, and he returned again to the United States to live with his younger son, Frank, a broadcasting executive, in Harwichport, Massachusetts.

Dr Osborn is survived by two sons, three daughters sixteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.



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Street, Melbourne. 6–9pm. Cost \$60. Contact: Elizabeth Yates, ph (03) 9813 1924, fax (03) 9882 4274, libflis@vicnet.net.au

15–16/7 Insearch/Knight-Ridder Information Seminars Introductory DIALOG (15/7), Business (16/7). Melbourne contact: (02) 9212 2867, krinfo.uts.edu.au

30/7 FLIS Training Pty Ltd. Reporting to management. Monash Uni Conference Centre, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne. 9.30–5pm. Cost \$170. Contact: Elizabeth Yates, ph (03) 9813 1925, fax (03) 9882 4274, libflis@vicnet.net.au

13/8 FLIS Training Pty Ltd. Training for in-house training. Monash Uni Conference Centre, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne. 9.30–5pm. Cost \$170. Contact: Elizabeth Yates, ph (03) 9813 1924, fax (03) 9882 4274, libflis@vicnet.net.au

27/8 FLIS Training Pty Ltd. Supervision skills for team leaders. Monash Uni Conference Centre, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne. 9.30–5pm. Cost \$170. Contact: Elizabeth Yates, ph (03) 9813 1925, fax (03) 9882 4274, libflis@vicnet.net.au

• **15–16/11 Children's and Youth Services Section.** Bridging the gap — a literary weekend, Old Castlemain Gaol. Contact Terry May, ph (03) 9743 1168

WA

• **12/6–11/12 ALIA National Special Libraries section committee meetings.** (12/6; 10/7; 14/8; 11/9; 9/10; 13/11; 11/12). Alexander Library Building, Ground Floor, Room G2. Time: 5pm. Contact: Joyce Steveni, ph (08) 9459 0602.

• **21/6 WA Special Libraries section with the WA CPD section.** Web Pages — an introduction; with guest speakers. Curtin Uni Library Building, Dept of Library Studies, Bentley. 9–2pm, \$75 ALIA members, \$125 non-members. Contact: Kay Schneider, ph 015 083 202, schneide@cleo.murdoch.edu.au. Maximum 26 — be quick!

• **23/6–25/8 WA Special Libraries section committee meeting dates.** (23/6; 28/7; 25/8). Venue: TBA. Time: 5.30–6.30pm. Contact: Tracy Gerritsen, ph (09) 366 4737, fax (09) 366 4779, gerritsent@eec.com.au

• **24/6–18/11 WA Library Technician Section meeting dates.** (24/6; 22/7; 27/8; 9/9; 22/10; 18/11). For further details contact:

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