

Collection enhanced

Juliet Flesch, collection management librarian, University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne Library recently acquired, through the Henry Arthur Pitt Memorial Bequest, an exceptional addition to its collections of French labour history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collections were part of the personal library of Robert Brécy.

Born in Paris in 1912, Brécy was obliged for financial reasons to leave school at the age of 14. After a period as an apprentice quantity surveyor, he worked in banking and local government from 1926 to the outbreak of war in 1939. During the war he was concerned with the evacuation of museums on the Mediterranean coast to safe havens in the hinterland. In 1948, he became editor-in-chief of *Cahiers du communisme*.

As well as journal articles, Brécy published two books of labour history: an important bibliography, *Le mouvement syndical en France 1871-1921: essai bibliographique* (1963, revised edition 1982) and *La Grève Générale en France* (1969).

Robert Brécy died in 1996 and his library came on the market earlier this year, in two collections. His 'reference collection' numbered almost 600 titles, including primary and secondary material for labour history in Europe from the nineteenth century, many containing his own annotations. Of these, the University of Melbourne purchased 119 items. A catalogue compiled by the bookseller Anton Gerits & Son has been retained, so that although the library does not hold the complete reference collection, there is a record of the books owned by Brécy.

While the reference collection is of undoubted value to the specialist historian, the second collection has a more immediate and general appeal, for Robert Brécy's second historical interest was French popular music from the French Revolution to the middle of the present century. From 1978 to 1993 he published *Florilège de la chanson*

révolutionnaire de 1789 au Front Populaire (1978, revised edition 1990), *La Révolution en chantant: recueil de chansons de 1789 à 1799* (1989) which won the Grand Prix of the Académie Charles Cros, *La chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (1991), *Autour de la Muse Rouge: groupe de poètes et chansonniers révolutionnaires 1901-1939* (1991) and *Eugène Bizeau a 100 ans* (1993).

This collection was acquired in its entirety and will be kept together. Many items consist of several works bound together and there is a complete collection of the songbooks of the *Société Lyrique du Caveau* as well as one collection of over 1000 pieces of music, with text, musical notation and often a front-cover illustration of significant historical interest.

All the greats are represented in this collection, and there are in addition many collections of poems, songs and polemical materials by lesser-known authors and performers, whose obscurity today belies the important part they played in the culture of their time. Many of the books were annotated by Brécy in the course of his research, many are inscribed to him. There are manuscript letters and song-texts bound into some of the volumes.

The Henry Arthur Pitt Memorial Bequest has provided many recent important additions to the University of Melbourne's research collections. The Robert Brécy collection on French popular music is the most recent and promises to be one of the most exciting. Because the bequest also provides funds for the processing of the material it acquires, the collection is being catalogued immediately and is accessible through the library's on-line catalogue. The rarity and fragility of some of the contents make it unsuitable for loan, but visitors to the reading room have a treat in store! ■



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• 28/11 ACT UCRLS section. *AGM and lunch*. Speaker: Lynn Hard, ADFA on *Memoirs of an Amnesiac*. ANU University House, Scarth Room, 12pm for 12:15pm. Contact: Nancy Clarke, ph 02 6209 1117, N.Clarke@signadou.acu.edu.au.

NSW

• 1/10 NSW Special Libraries section. *Evaluating information found on the Internet*. KPMG Auditorium, Level 27, 45 Clarence Street, Sydney. 5:30 for 6pm, \$8 Specials members, \$12 non-members. RSVP: Pam Norman, ph 02 9335 7511, fx 02 9299 7077.

3-28/10 Insearch/Knight-Ridder Information Seminars. DIALOG Web Workshop (3/10), Introductory DIALOG (8/10), Patents (9/10), Pharmaceutical (28/10). Sydney contact: 02 9212 2867, kinfo.aus@uts.edu.au.

• 8/10 ALIA One-Person Australian Libraries SIG (NSW). *Morning tea and library visit (pre-Specials conference)*. Leighton Contractors Library, 472 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest, 10am. Contact: Diana Scott James, ph 02 9925 6176, fx 02 9925 6011, diana.jones@leicon.com.au. RSVP by 3/10.

• 14/10-5/11 NSW Schools section committee meeting dates. Leichhardt Primary School, Joint Council Rooms. 7pm. (14/10; 5/11). Contact: Andrew Barber, ph 02 9519 1544, fx 02 9519 1657.

15/10 Indexing/Abstracting of databases. UNSW, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies. Contact: Maureen Henninger, ph 02 9385 3589, fx 02 9385 3430, M.Henninger@unsw.edu.au.

• 20/10 NSW Branch. *Seminar with overseas speaker: Sylvia Webb in Newcastle*. Further details TBA. Contact: Gary Jones, ph 02 4921 5824, ulgdj@dewey.newcastle.edu.au.

• 21/10 NSW Branch. *Seminar with overseas speaker: Sylvia Webb, on knowledge management. Know-how — New directions in information*. Sylvia is a keynote speaker at the Specials, Health and Law Librarians Conference, Perth. 6pm. Free for ALIA members only. Refreshments provided, bookings essential — RSVP: Jo-anne Fuller, ph 02 9906 6000, jojo1@ozemail.com.au.

• 21/10 NSW RAISS. *Evaluating Internet resources: business, education and health sciences*. Speakers included: Katie Wilson and Julia Bale. Venue: State Library of NSW, Metcalfe Auditorium. Time: 9-1pm, registration from: 8:30am. Cost: \$80 ALIA members, \$100 non-members. RSVP: Lorraine Evison, ph 02 9772 9287, levison@uws.edu.au.

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