

Special librarians in Victoria

The Victorian Special Librarians group of ALIA has a habit of ensuring members keep in touch. In addition to having a quarterly newsletter, which is sent to around 250 members, the committee organises library tours to places where special collections are managed.

Around Melbourne

Special librarians were invited to five events in 2006. A group of Special librarians visiting libraries is an interesting sight. We have more than a common interest and background in the information world, we know how important it is to have information well organised and we appreciate the amount of work and thought that goes into developing and maintaining even the smallest collection.

The Melbourne Athenaeum

We started 2006 with a visit to the Melbourne Athenaeum, where Jill Bartholomeusz played host. Founded in 1839 as a Mechanics Institute, the library is steeped in history and still operates as a subscription library. The Athenaeum Theatre is part of the institution and we were very lucky to have a tour of the theatre included in the visit. The theatre is a well-known venue for lectures and entertainments of all kinds from 1840 onwards. Redmond Barry once gave lectures, The Melbourne Opera regularly performs operas and currently a season of a musical tribute to Cat Stephens is attracting a large audience.

Sensis

In contrast, we visited to a brand new environment in Latrobe Street (beautiful place to work in) where Stephen Haby and his Sensis team had invited us to a presentation. There is no library but the team members are librarians. We were introduced to the familiar yellow and white pages, Invizage Technology services, City search, Where is, Sensis1234 and Sensis.com.au. We learnt about the underlying concepts and legal considerations in determining subject headings and effective placement of entries. The librarians work as Indexing Specialists. Taxonomy is their skill.

NGV

The opportunity to go behind the scenes at the National Gallery of Victoria was too good to miss so this lunch-time event was booked out very quickly. Michael Watson discussed the development of the library over the years. He is hoping for further improvements as there is an apparent need for more space because collections are growing and services are increasing. The library is open to the public. The collection is a wonderful resource for art lovers and students.

Lots of Stamps

At the Philatelic Bureau Bruce Davidson. told us everything about stamps; the stories behind the subjects and creators; the methods of printing and distribution; how the collections are stored and exhibited and about collecting stamps. Anyone can go to the Bureau to see the exhibition but having someone like Bruce as a guide made it much more interesting. Bruce enjoyed showing us around particularly as he was the curator of the exhibition.

Genealogical Society of Victoria

Finally, for our event in November, we visited the Genealogical Society of Victoria. Eleanor Pugsley, Research Services Manager and Librarian Linley Hooper at GSV gave the run down on researching your family history. The library at GSV provided a text-book example of well-designed services for their clients. The resources in hard copy, electronic databases and micro film are all catalogued using InMagic software, designed in a very user-friendly manner for

their members, numbering over 6000.

Big party

Then we went upstairs to dinner. The tables were placed together in a long line. It was like a big family party except we didn't have to cook or clean up. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable evening. But that's not difficult to achieve. Librarians just love going out with other librarians.

This is what one member said:

This event topped a year of most interesting resource centre tours and great opportunities to catch up with fellow information workers. Well done to all of you for your considerable work throughout the year. (Sandra)

Plans for 2007

For 2007 the committee has planned more interesting visits. In February we went to Australian College of Natural Medicine where Philip Starks gave a tour of his library and discussed the excellent services he provides for students and lecturers of the college. A full report will be available in a forthcoming newsletter.

Later in 2007 we will be visiting Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Public Records Office of Victoria and finish with an end of year celebration at the Melbourne Cricket Club where a tour of the library will be followed by dinner.

Newsletter – turning digital

After being circulated in hard copy format for 23 years, our newsletter turns digital. Editions are already stored on ALIA's website: <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/specialvic/vicspecials/>

In future the newsletter will be forwarded via email. If you would like to receive new editions just access the page of groups on ALIA's website and place a tick against the Victorian Special libraries group. Donna Leung will take over as editor of the newsletter, assisted by Katy Li, who will be in charge of advertising. We look forward to keeping in touch.

To all special librarians – we think you're special where ever you are.

Marjorie Dalvean Vic Specials Committee



Members of Vic Specials group had dinner together at the Italian restaurant, La Cucina in Melbourne, after visiting the GSV library. Photo taken by librarian Katy Li.