

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

A quick search on the National Library of Australia's catalogue shows that *The Australian Library Journal* was first published in July 1951, which means that volume 60 in 2011 will be the diamond anniversary – quite an achievement in terms of longevity and resilience in an electronic age of ephemera and changing fortunes for journals.

Flipping quickly through one of the earlier volumes (and it was fast, the pages were being flipped for me), I was immediately struck by the fact that some things do appear to have changed. For one, there are advertisements, and lots of them, mostly for bookshops, binderies and related industries, and some rather quaint in a *Women's Weekly* sort of way. Malouf's book bindery, for example, ran the endearing pitch "loose parts are lost parts". Secondly, rather than being what we now call a scholarly publication dominated by the recognisable format of the research-based article, these early issues also carried reports from local branches and sections and individual libraries (for example, the Weapons Research Establishment Library in South Australia) and an intriguing section, *The Australian Library Scene*. There were even lists of LAA examination results and a *For Sale* section.

But what of the content of the articles themselves? Titles such as *University Training for Librarians*, *Cooperation between School and Children's Libraries*, *Public Library Research Services*, *Information Officer versus Special Librarian*, *How Bookish Should a Librarian Be?*, *The Preparation and Editing of Technical Papers*, *A System of Classification for Music and Related Materials* give a flavour of the topics of interest at the time.

Have our ideas, pursuits and preoccupations changed all that much? Some familiar threads emerge: university libraries and ICT convergence (Richard Sayers), educating for knowledge management (Ross Todd and Gray Southon) and of library technicians (Mary Carroll), public and school libraries (Alan Bundy), mould in the tropics (Mary Anne Temby), the value nexus between business and information (Marianne Broadbent), an information agenda for ALIA (Neil McLean).

The impression I am left with is that Australian libraries do have a rich history, and *ALJ* has been an invaluable vehicle for recording and preserving some of this in detail. But the journal has also evolved and adapted to changing times. And, while not wanting to lose some of the historical purpose, we also need to remain competitive amongst others in the publishing industry and responsive to the needs and preferences and requirements of our stakeholders – our readers, authors and the Association itself.

To mark this milestone in the publishing history of *ALJ*, we intend selecting a compilation of seminal articles from past decades, with reflective commentaries from past authors and experts on the topics, examining their impact and likely future import. We will publish this in a special Diamond Anniversary issue at the end of the year.

So we're inviting readers to have a look through past and suggest the seminal article/s for the decade. And if you have any suggestions for authors of reflective commentaries, please send me these as well. Please send your ideas to me at ann.ritchie@alia.org.au by the end of the April.

And on another note, if you're keen to contribute to *ALJ* as a peer reviewer (don't forget - this does attract PD points) please do get in touch.

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Note: *The last decade of ALJ (volume 50 to 57) is available online at www.alia.org.au/publishing/alj and in any of the aggregated journal sets accessible through your personal or library subscription.*

PROFESSOR CHARLES OPPENHEIM JOINS ALJ EDITORIAL BOARD

Professor Charles Oppenheim has been appointed to the Editorial Board of the *Australian Library Journal*, joining the team as the *Journal* celebrates its diamond anniversary and 60 years of publication.

Professor Oppenheim recently retired from his position as Professor of Information Science and former Head of the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, where his teaching focused on information science and legal issues in information and electronic information management. His research interests centre on legal and ethical issues in information work, knowledge management and the electronic information and publishing industries, along with citation studies, bibliometrics and national information policy.

Named as one of the UK's top ten library and information professionals in 2002, Professor Oppenheim is also a past Associate Editor of the *Journal of Information Science* and has strong links to Australian scholarship through his current position as Visiting Professor at the University of Queensland.

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