

Alan Ives, comp. *Archives in Australia*. Canberra, Pearce Press Processed Publications, 1978. 7 vols. ISBN 0-908410-11 x (7 vol. set) \$200.00
Sole Distributor: James Bennett Pty. Ltd., Collaroy, NSW, 2047.

Archives and their contents may not, at first sight, be of prime interest to bibliographers who, by definition, are concerned with the printed records of civilization. However, the purpose of this remarkable collection of data on Australian archives, archivists and archival practices is to provide a guide to what, in broad terms, can best be described as the foundations of history and historiography. Archival records as such, their management, and the work and achievement of those who are responsible for their management, are the substance of the literature which Alan Ives has listed in the seven volumes under review. Every bibliographer of Australian history, and historical bibliographers in general, are deeply indebted to him for the enormous effort he has put into this project.

The first three volumes contain a retrospective bibliography of the literature on Australian archives and manuscripts, listing over 2,200 references. A subject index and notes on institutional records greatly assist potential users. The fourth volume, entitled "Current archives bibliography Australia" — for which Ives has coined the acronym CURABA — brings the listing of the first three volumes up to 1977. The organization of these volumes is not very easy to follow because the arrangement appears to be dictated by an archivist's approach to the subject matter — and while this is understandable and justifiable, it is not the same approach which a bibliographer might have taken. However, the presence of an author index helps in the CURABA volume, and references to archival acquisitions reported by the National Library of Australia complement the work.

The fifth volume contains a series of biographical and bibliographical notes on Australia's leading archivists. These unpretentious "contributions from 'modest practitioners'" will form a useful basis for a future history of archival studies in Australia.

Notes on archives and manuscript collections in Australia fill the last two volumes, together with lists of finding aids as well as comments and explanations by historians.

Although these volumes are quite unattractive from the typographical point of view — "home spun" would be the kindest way of describing them, even though their price might suggest some high level of sophisticated book production — their value as reference guides is considerable and one can only hope that Alan Ives will continue with this task of charting the dark labyrinth of archival practices in Australia.

One more point has to be made in the appreciation of this work. Besides the seven-volume edition to which this review specifically refers, Ives has seen

fit to run off each major section as a separate publication, forming some 32 parts. It is not clear from Bennett's advertisement that these parts are available separately and, if so, at what cost. This is certain, however, that Ives has produced a cataloguer's nightmare and a bibliographer's dream.

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