

ROSS BROS. ARCHIVES DONATED TO B.P.A.

ROSS BROS. is one of Sydney's most respected printers and until recently perhaps the sole remaining city printer to have occupied original premises from the late 1800s. Their removal to new premises several months ago saw a general clearing out including the question as to what to do with the company's historic business records, some dating back to the end of last century. One major library was approached about material from before the Great War, including material from the late 1800s, but was not interested. Unfortunately remarks made by the officer of the library — something to the effect that they were of little value — led to them being inadvertently destroyed, much to the despair of the company secretary (and myself!).

I did however, rescue later material — ledgers and a cash book covering the period 1915–1941 — and these are now in the Brandywine Press & Archive. The material comprises:-

1. Ledgers recording printing jobs (details of length of run, type of job, cost). 8 vols. Over 6,500 pages of transactions arranged by customer recording c75,000 business transactions from 1 March 1915 to 30 June 1941. Previous material accidentally destroyed. Subsequent material, now in the form of job folders, destroyed with the exception of current records.
2. Cash book recording receipts and expenditure (wages, 'subcontracting' work, etc.) for the period 1 September 1927 to 31 October 1934. Over 400 pages with details of c8,000 transactions.

Ross Bros. to a considerable extent specialized in printing for the racing fraternity and much of their printing was done for clients in this area — for example, the Australian Jockey Club, Canterbury Race Course Co., Ascot Race Club, Australian Trotting Club, Kembla Grange Race Club, Gosford Race Club, etc. Other clients included City Tattersalls Club, PMU, McWilliam's Wines, Gowings, APM, Coastal Farmers Coop. Society, Simmons Ltd., William Arnott, Australian Drug Co., the Government Printing Office, Edwards Dunlop, etc.

In all, these records provide valuable information on printing between the wars. Although the B.P.A. is not a public collection arrangements can be made to use this material under certain conditions (enquiries by letter please). There is not a great deal of archival material in the collection at present; however, I hope more will follow.

J P Wegner, Librarian,
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