

Report of the Council

1979

Monash University

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*Front cover: Bust of Sir John Monash (sculptor — Paul R. Montford)
and the ceremonial mace of the University (from a sketch by Arno Roger-Genersh).*

Photographs in this Report are by Hervé Alleaume, Rick
Crompton, Julie Fraser, and Graham Harris.

\$915,603 (81.5 per cent) being provided by outside funding agencies ranging from the Australian Research Grants Committee through industry and research foundations to private individuals. The faculty was most

grateful for this support which allowed the continuation of a vigorous programme of research, as demonstrated by the lengthy list of publications shown in the University's annual *Research Report*.

Library

Librarian: Mr T.B. Southwell, B.A.(Syd.), A.L.A.A.

More and more in 1979 the spread of new technology became visible. To the public the 'squeaky pen' of automatic data collection units could be heard in more of the libraries; to the research workers, access to a startling array of on-line data bases became a reality; while the cataloguing department had the difficult and time-consuming task of adjustment to a whole range of external restrictions and standards while trying to hold to self-consistency in existing records.

Overall it was a satisfactory year. Funds available were adequate to keep up with significant current publishing in our areas of collection, though not for any major programme of retrospective purchasing. It is clear that this must be cautiously resumed, though in the face of continuing steep price rises for all library materials, and the promise of more to come, this is a difficult decision to make.

Re-assessment of the Library's periodicals subscriptions continued, but in a calmer atmosphere: unfortunately the results were minimal. In 1980 periodical subscriptions must be trimmed to a financially more healthy state.

A sub-committee of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (A.V.C.C.), set up to look at non-salary library costs, asked the Library to prepare and maintain an index of the costs of books, periodicals and binding. This has been done since 1976, and the results distributed to the A.V.C.C., the T.E.C., and other university libraries. In 1979 two other libraries commenced supplying input

to the index, which should make it even more widely acceptable. One fact revealed by the index is that in 1979 new books, whose price rose on average 19 per cent over the year, outpaced periodicals, whose inflation rate was 15.3 per cent.

The slight downward trend in student loans was reversed in this year; they increased from 534,194 to 598,671, some 12 per cent, with no increase in student numbers. The Plessey light-pen data collection system was extended to Hargrave and Biomedical Libraries early in the year with very few difficulties. Badging of books in the Law Library was carried out in November and December, in preparation for equipment to be installed in 1980.

The system was also extended to State College Rusden early in the year, and S.C.V. Burwood is being readied for connection in 1980. A staff member has been appointed to handle both the liaison and the programming involved in these outside activities, so that their interference with the primary operation is minimal.

A very positive improvement in communication virtually transformed the information retrieval field. The Biomedical Library had been an enthusiastic user of the MEDLINE system and later BIOSIS, mounted for Australia by the Department of Health and the National Library but, as every search involved tying up a trunk line to Canberra, for some time costs were a restraint. During the year, the Department established a com-

The German Democratic Republic donated about 100 classical and contemporary East German books to the Monash Library. The University Librarian, Mr Brian Southwell inspects a selection of the books.



munications node in Melbourne, and the cost of a search was suddenly reduced to that of a local call.

An even more dramatic development was the inauguration of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission's 'MIDAS' service, in which packet-switching techniques are used in a satellite relay to networks in the U.S.A. As a result, quick low-cost searches are possible, on computers in America, of data bases of greater variety and in depth than could be imagined in Australia. So far the humanities are badly served in the provision of these files, but for most other areas of study they will be of enormous value.

Access to tools with such power naturally throws into doubt the future of AUSINET, the Australian equivalent. Its first base and

its original *raison d'être* was the educational file, ERIC, and this is still the file most often used. Some Australian bases are beginning to appear, but until they become more significant, the future of AUSINET seems to be as a practice pitch for new search analysts and as an inexpensive way of refining search strategies for later application on DIALOG or ORBIT in the United States.

It has been expected that the greater information available from these data bases would result in an increased demand for a wider range of documents. In fact, inter-library borrowings did increase, but only slightly (from 5,640 to 6,179) and probably not significantly. Inter-library loans on the other hand, showed a slight drop, from 26,799 to 26,671; the only other fall ever recorded was in 1966.

Reader Education activities continued as a time-consuming but necessary and satisfying part of reader services work. In the Humanities and Social Sciences Library a coordinator of reader education was appointed, and a very useful seminar was held, attended by the Library's subject specialists and the departmental first-year coordinators, to prevent duplication.

The area of activity of the Biomedical Library, supported in its role as reference centre of the Australian Hospitals Association by the Kellogg Foundation, has been widened following positive measures to publicise the service. Hospitals in all states and several countries of the South Pacific have been helped, and the service is still expanding. Closer to home, the University is now affiliated with ten different hospitals spread between Dandenong and Geelong, and to all of these the Biomedical Library provides a continuing bibliographic checking, reference and the University's interloan service in support of staff and students.

Three major bibliographic works were completed during the year by staff of the Law Library: *Legal Research: Materials and Methods*, (2nd edn, Law Book Co.), for which the Law Librarian, Ted Glasson, was co-editor with Professor Campbell and Mrs Lahore; *Case-Notes Index* (1968 to date); and *Union List of Law Reports Held in Australian Libraries*. The latter two have been widely distributed in Australia and most favourably received.

Mention has been made of the preparation of books in the Law Library for computerised circulation. Also during the year an automatic book security system was installed, after a stock-take had revealed serious book losses. It is too early to be sure of results but the impression is gained that the cost is justified and losses markedly reduced.

Whereas automation of reader services processes has expanded horizons for the staff

and done so with minimal disruption the same cannot be said for cataloguing. Automation of cataloguing processes, especially as part of a consortium, has imposed considerable strains on the staff concerned. With the computer support still under development, and Monash as the first large library to enter the scheme, every small decision has major implications, and the time taken in consultation is considerable. The spirit of compromise may be present; even so the details of operation require soul-searching, discussion and time. Work began on the input of cataloguing to the CAVAL data base in July. By the end of the year procedures were clarified, but Monash entries were still few, and mainly experimental. However, the basic work has been done, and it is expected that the pace will increase quite rapidly in 1980.

To add to the difficulties, two major changes in international formats were introduced during the year: the second edition of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, which makes radical changes in forms of heading, names and other aspects of cataloguing, and the 19th edition of Dewey, in which many areas have quite new classifications. Different national agencies, from which Monash draws cataloguing data, have different time-tables for the implementation of these new rules, and synchronising these changes with Monash Library's changes in cataloguing practice and the planned closing of the card catalogue late in 1980 has meant even greater strains. With all this disruption, it is hardly surprising that cataloguing output fell during the year, by about 2,000 titles, giving an addition of 26,487 titles to stock.

Total stock rose by nearly 53,000 volumes, to 991,500. It appears certain that the Library will top its millionth volume early in the new year — less than twenty years after the appointment of the first Librarian. This is an achievement of which Monash University can be proud.

One factor which has made it possible is the continuing support of its friends: the formally-titled Friends of the Library, who have made possible the purchase of many treasures, the Parents' Group, who have again this

year made the Library the main beneficiary of their fund-raising, and the many thousands of others who continue to assist, either with gifts of books, or by their continuing support of the Library Appeal.