

In the first part there are 112 sections on such topics as Arabic history and literature, classics, engineering, fine arts, law and military history, and such forms as almanacs, bookplates, dissertations, manuscripts, and union catalogs. Occasionally a heading containing but slight information is separated from an inclusive subject with which it could have placed (e.g., Sri Lanka and South Asia). Sometimes there is coverage of a specific topic (physical education, political philosophy, Portuguese history and literature, women), but no section on the broader field (education, philosophy, European history, sociology) to which it pertains. Entries generally indicate the nature and extent of holdings in those libraries with significant amounts of material—the most extensive and/or important collection coming first and all Australian institutions before those in New Zealand. Naturally the guide concentrates on the national, university, and other libraries with holdings important for research; there is little information on the institutes of technology and the colleges of advanced education (presumably an area for expanded coverage in a second edition). The descriptions vary from a brief note of existence (e.g., "the University of Sydney Library has a separate section of erotic literature," p.57) to four to six pages for such broad fields as Australian history and periodicals and sets.

Downs singles out for discussion in the second part a mere twenty-four persons—understandably including Captain James Cook, Katherine Mansfield, and William Shakespeare. One wonders, however, why Edmund Husser, Joan of Arc, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Rainer Maria Rilke appear here, when each receives less than seven lines of comment. Would it not have been wise to incorporate such brief mentions into the appropriate topical section?

The extensive bibliography (565 items, consisting of guides, surveys, library catalogs, periodical articles, etc.) constitutes one of the book's most valuable reference features. Although the alphabetical arrangement does not favor the person interested in specific subjects, many bibliographical references (some in abbreviated form) in the text itself help to overcome this limitation.

The index leads the reader back to topics,

to libraries, to individual organizations and institutions, and even to previous surveys of resources (e.g., Burmester, Osborn, and Tauber) but not always to names of collectors who assembled materials. Libraries of universities appear under their distinctive name or place (e.g., La Trobe, Melbourne University), while national and state libraries appear in the *N*'s and *S*'s.

This reader has mixed feelings toward the volume's layout. The basic text (p.9–120) has generous space between headings and text and between sections, as well as ample white space surrounding the text. In contrast, the bibliography's listings are packed into twenty-five pages (an average of 11.3 entries per column); with no space between items and without "hanging indentation" this entire section is harder on the eye than it ought to be.

Some readers might question the value of six and one-half pages of travel information on the two countries (dubbed "Impressions" by the author), but there is no doubt that, with or without such comments, a map would have proven helpful. Most of the other shortcomings mentioned above probably result from time limitations (apparently the field research was limited to a two-month tour; cf. p.9) and/or hasty editing. The scholarly production of Robert B. Downs is legendary; once again the "dean of library resources" has given us a useful tool.—William Vernon Jackson, *University of Texas, Austin*.

***Australian Official Publications.*** Edited by D. H. Borchardt. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1979. 365p. A\$10.50. ISBN 0-582-71461-3 cloth; 0-582-71444-3 (paper).

The title of this excellent book does not indicate its true scope. Rather than, as might be expected, a list of publications, it is an extensive series of essays on government in Australia and its written records. The contributors to this work are all experts in their field.

Successful use of government publications depends on an understanding of the government(s) involved. Recognizing this, the contributors to the first two chapters describe in some detail the functioning of government in Australia at federal, state, and local levels. Such an explanation is necessary to

understand the distribution of responsibility and therefore what information is likely to be published at various levels.

Thereafter in successive chapters the range of publications is described, with attention first to parliamentary publications, then judicial, followed by those of the various government departments and authorities. The latter are subdivided by subject rather than by department or level. As admitted by the editor, no effort has been made "to list every single document" but rather to give an idea of the range and scope of publications available. The level and style of treatment of the various sections are uneven and there is some degree of overlap. Few people would want, as this reviewer did, to read steadily through it; the density of information is overwhelming. The more sensible way would be to read (using the index) those parts relevant to the subject of interest or to documents being sought. Nevertheless there is in these chapters much information essential to the understanding of what can or cannot be found in the various classes of publication. Examples that come to mind are the discussion of how to track down the history of a bill together with the stumbling blocks in the way of the researcher, and the process by which law reports have evolved and are maintained.

There is, however, a publication that can be used to accompany and supplement this survey. Itself an example of a semi-official publication and the problems of bibliographic description, it is *Government Publications of Australia: A List of Lists*, 2d ed., compiled by the Sub-Committee on Government Publications of the Victorian Regional Committee of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographic Services (Melbourne: Library Council of Victoria, 1979, 47p., A\$4.50, ISBN 0-909962-26-X). Libraries would be well advised to have both texts available.

Librarians who are not necessarily interested in Australia will be interested in the last three chapters, which describe in some detail the production and distribution of documents, their bibliographical control (or lack of it), and access through libraries and their catalogs. These chapters discuss frankly many problems only too well known

to librarians anywhere—inadequate government coordination, historical gaps in the record, and the difficulty of dovetailing bibliographic projects.

Despite some reservations arising from the chosen format, there is no doubt that this book must be in every library serving users with an interest in Australia. Library schools and document collections will also benefit from the discussions of governments as publishers and the problems of access to official information. For those who need to acquire materials in specific subjects it can also help by suggesting possible leads to be followed up in more strictly bibliographical guides. Borchardt is to be congratulated on a further contribution to Australian bibliography.—*Murray S. Martin, Pennsylvania State University, University Park.*

Lancaster, F. Wilfrid. *Information Retrieval Systems: Characteristics, Testing and Evaluation*. 2d ed. Information Sciences Series. New York: Wiley, 1979. 381p. \$19.95. LC 78-11078. ISBN 0-471-04663-6.

Van Rijsbergen, C. J. *Information Retrieval*. 2d ed. London, Boston: Butterworths, 1979. 208p. \$32.50. LC 78-40725. ISBN 0-408-70929-4. (Available from: Butterworths, 10 Tower Office Park, Woburn, MA 01801.)

When two textbooks on information retrieval are published at about the same time, each a second edition, each intended mainly or in part for the use in instruction of college- or graduate-level students of library and information science, it is tempting to compare them for further significant similarities. In this case—with one regrettable exception—there are none to be found. While addressing a common topic, these two books could hardly be more dissimilar. They are not in competition; each serves a different purpose for a different type of audience.

The regrettable similarity between these books is that both of them, through failure to discuss or identify alternatives, equate information retrieval to subject searching. A student who depends entirely on either will learn little or nothing about the unique aspects, the importance, or even the existence of information retrieval based on non-subject approaches such as names, titles,