

# ICA/SUV Communique

## Newsletter of Provisional Section of University and Research Institution Archives

### Volume 2, Number 2

Volume 2, Number 1  
July 1996

### From the Chair

The ICA/SUV is about to complete its four-year provisional period. We have every expectation that the term "provisional" will be removed from the section's name at the Beijing Congress. The section has worked toward its goals as expressed in the by-laws: to promote communication and cooperation between archives; to gather and disseminate information about the creation and administration of archives and about the role of archives in relation to their host institution and to society at large, and about the administrative policies and procedures which they have developed; to assist in the development and strengthening of archives; and to cooperate with other bodies of the ICA. The section has also developed procedures for its own governance including procedures for the election of the section's leadership.

However, there is still much work which can be done. Our membership, although growing, draws heavily from countries within the UNESCO definition of Europe. Perhaps the Beijing meeting will encourage membership from countries in Asia and Southeast Asia. Will our current program of activities be of assistance to those archivists? Our major activity of the past three years, the seminar, is an expensive proposition which precludes the attendance of a majority of our members. Can we develop another activity to provide similar opportunities for the exchange of ideas to members who cannot attend the seminars? The recently completed joint workshop was a wonderful chance to pool our expertise with an international organization which shares our interests. Can we continue to reach out to organizations which share our concerns?

It will be an exciting future for the ICA/SUV. We would like to express our thanks to the members and all archival colleagues who have participated during the first four years. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

Marjorie Barritt  
for the steering committee

## **Election Report**

The results from our democratic, completely open election were in as of April 1996. The members who had allowed their names to be put in nomination were notified in early May. The nominating committee is pleased with the participation of the section members, especially the fifteen members who were willing to be nominees and the forty-five (out of seventy-six ballots mailed) members who voted. The count was very close and everyone on the ballot received much support from their colleagues. The new steering committee includes four members who are continuing their tenure on the committee and six members new to the committee.

The officers whose terms begin in Beijing are: Patricia Methven, chair, to serve a four-year term and Andree Despy-Meyer, secretary, to serve a two-year term.

Steering Committee members to serve a four-year term:

- Mariza Bottino
- Christina Jonsson
- Angeles Moreno Lopez
- Frank Scheelings
- Virginia Teehan

Steering Committee members to serve a two-year term:

- Anne Barrett
- Esperanza de Varona
- Guy Dinel
- Tim Robinson
- Eero Vallisaari

We have submitted the names of the elected chair and secretary to ICA for their official appointment. The nominating committee: Marjorie Barritt, Didier Devriese, and Peter Harper

### **Summary Proceedings of the Liege meeting. Archiving the Records of Contemporary Science**

A joint meeting organised by the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science, Division of History of Science, Commission on Bibliography and Documentation and the International Council on Archives Provisional Section of University and Research Institution Archives, Archives of Science Subgroup.

## **28-29 May 1996, Liege, Belgium**

ICA/SUV Programme Committee: Anne Barrett (UK), Gavan McCarthy (Australia), Gianni Paoloni (Italy). Hosted by: Professor Robert Halleux, Universite de Liege

### **Conference Statement**

A meeting of archivists and historians of science in Liege discussed issues relating to the documentation of contemporary science and the problems and opportunities that have arisen in recent years in relation to records creation and recordkeeping. These issues were examined with a particular reference to records in electronic systems.

Some of the key themes of the meeting were:

- to explore the changes in scientific practice brought about by electronic communications systems and the implications of that for the management and preservation of scientific records;
- to consider the respective responsibilities of scientists, archivists and historians in the selection of records to be preserved;
- to develop strategies for archivists at the organisational, national and international levels;
- to develop strategies for impressing the importance of this issue upon the scientific community and the organisations in which they work.

Particular attention was paid to the differences in current recordkeeping practices between strategic fields of research like biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, and sciences that are far from the market, like mathematics. The meeting emphasised the importance of developing archival techniques that will ensure the integrity, authenticity and credibility of records generated electronically. The meeting expressed concern that the extent of this problem is not adequately known and that significant further research is required to enable the development and implementation of appropriate strategies. The meeting recognised the importance of using the ICA, IUHPS DHS and ICSU to bring the results of the meeting to the broader communities of archivists, historians and scientists.

### **Working Groups**

Working Groups were allocated prior to the conference to draft the conference statement and develop sets of strategies for specific areas:

- Strategies for Individual Archives
- Strategies for National Scientific Communities
- Strategies for the International Science Archives Community

## **Working Group 1 - Strategies for Institutional Archives / Archivists**

Leader: Anne Barrett (UK)

- Didier de Vriese (Belgium)
- Denise Ogilvie (France)
- Frank Scheelings (Belgium)
- Sofie de Winter (Belgium)

The strategy proposed at the institutional level is to encourage University and other institutional archivists to investigate a number of issues concerning recordkeeping. The model for these investigations will be taken, in the first instance, from two French and one Australian questionnaires that have already been implemented. The results of these studies will be analysed by the group, and the resulting information be fed into the national and international strategies. A document in the form of "Guidelines for the Interviewer" will be produced and will be published on the Internet. The purpose of the questionnaire will be to raise awareness of the need for recordkeeping by records creators and conversely to raise the awareness of the archivist as to the nature of records and state of recordkeeping in their institution.

## **Working Group 2 - Strategies at the National Level**

Leader: Gianni Paoloni (Italy)

- Andree Despy-Meyer (Belgium)
- Peter Harper (UK)
- Christina Jonsson (Sweden)

Most scientists and record managers seem to consider the problem of the preservation of science archives as irrelevant. Archivists and historians of contemporary science wish to draw to the attention of the science communities to the potential dangers coming from the loss of evidence on the research process, and to stress the importance of documenting the process itself besides the obvious importance of publishing and/or patenting results.

The increasing use of information technology by the scientific communities makes the problem of science archives more urgent. Although there is no consensus at present on standards for the preservation, validation and appraisal of the records produced by new electronic procedures, that is not an excuse for inaction. Archivists themselves have a responsibility for developing a study of records produced by the changing ways of scientific activity.

Science is an international endeavour, and key issues such as the possible loss of the memory of the scientific research work need to have an international framework. Nevertheless, problems in science archives will be dealt with mainly at the national level.

Appropriate institutions, according to the varying administrative organisation and traditions of

different countries, should be encouraged to undertake national surveys on science archives with particular reference to the use of research networks and electronic record keeping (both administrative and technical) in the context of scientific activity.

Universities, learned societies, academies, discipline-based professional associations and other scientific organisations may be of great help in promoting projects (involving a wide range of archival, historical, scientific, and technological expertise) on the preservation and usage of records in major scientific institutions and research centers, both university and non-university based. The relationship between electronic and non-electronic records, whether they be administrative records, policy records, scientific and technical records, data and scientific evidence, should be investigated. It is expected that this investigation will demonstrate that documenting the research process has significant value for the institutions's economic management, research policy strategies and decision making, and not just for the historical dimension.

These projects would also provide the intellectual and practical basis for the determination of appropriate standards for science archives, in all media, both in respect of preservation and planned disposal. These projects might lead wherever possible to the establishment of a national coordinating body or national information and reference organisation. All institutions and individuals owning or having custody of scientific archives should be encouraged to cooperate with this body.

### **Working Group 3 - Strategies at the International Level**

Leader: Joan Warnow-Blewett (USA)

- Finn Aaserud (Denmark)
- Ginette Gablot (France)
- Philip Kent (Australia)
- Carmelia Opsomer (Belgium)

Our targets on the international level are historians and archivists of modern science. To help us reach our targets we propose to use the parent organisations of this conference: The Division for the History of Science (especially its Commission on Bibliography and Documentation ) and The International Council on Archives (especially the science subgroup of its SUV section).

*We ask:*

*(1) That the Australian Science Archives Project extend its STAMA listserv and World Wide Web homepage to include the DHS Commission as well as the ICA/SUV section.*

*(2) That information be gathered and disseminated regarding:*

- *newsletters, websites, etc on history of science groups,*
- *disciplinary history groups, relevant archival groups, electronics records groups;*
- *scientific documentation projects and programmes;*
- *guides to archival collections, including national*
- *guides, disciplinary guides and relevant repository guides.*

## **Longer Term Effort**

To encourage national committees of DHS to initiate national efforts to collect information on papers of scientists in repositories and then to help secure papers now outside of repositories/depositories - the goal is to have ongoing programmes.

### **Steps:**

- gather information on existing national programmes - Joan Warnow Blewett will coordinate this knowledge as she is informed by individuals and report on the STAMA listserv with names and addresses of contacts;
- send letters and other communications to DHS national committees;
- encourage national committees to put out descriptions of specific collections.

### **Working Group 4 - The Conference Statement**

Leader: Gavan McCarthy (Australia)

- Rod Home (Australia)
- John Krige (France)
- Patricia Radelet (Belgium)
- Julia Sheppard (UK)
- Odile Welfele-Capy (France)

The above summary was delivered by Gavan McCarthy and Anne Barrett to the ICA office in Paris immediately after the conference ended, which as Gavan reports "made a great impression in many quarters having the summary proceedings available so quickly after the meeting."

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### **Steering Committee of the Section on University and Research Institution Archives Term begins September 1996**

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Prepared by Tim Robinson July 1996