



La Trobe University Library

Fleas in the Reading Room and Fiction on the Shelves: Meeting the Readers and Librarians of a Colonial Public Library

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HISTORY

- **Founded 1856**
- **High ideals**
- **No demand from ‘mechanics’**
- **Mainly self-serving**
- **Had to do something to ensure funding**
- **Confusion of role**



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MANAGEMENT

- Real power held by Committee
- Enthusiastic amateurs
- Library was 'theirs'
- No formal training, though informal networking
- Secretary-Librarian, formally subservient to committee
- 'Meat in the sandwich'



LIBRARIAN DUTIES 1850's

- Acquisition and processing of materials
- Counter attendance
- Canvassing and maintaining subscriptions
- Debt collection
- Cleaning of library



DOWNFALL 1867

- **Committee had no direction**
- **Financial viability rested on his shoulders, though little control**
- **Square peg**
- **Years of complaints recorded through minutes**
- **Changes immediately**



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Oct 24. 76
Should suggest the replacing of
"New & True" by "L'Esperance" as the motto
of our school. ~~John D. ...~~
Harrington Wilson
Spencer ...

~~...~~
I suggest that the ...
of ...
They to suggest that ...
"L'Esperance" is moved by ...
They to be preserved for the library
Boardroom

Report of ...
November 20/76

The "L'Esperance of Science" by ...
a valuable book published ...
London

The motto for a long time past has been ...
we by desire to suggest that a motto be ...
P.O.S. Thom
...

Nov 1st 1876
They to suggest ...
to be preserved for the library

Proposed

They to record the above
request

To ...
Charles ...
J. ...

Conrad

I would respectfully ...
suggest the advisability of some
measures being occasionally dis-
tributed over floor of Reading Room
which would cause less to remain
on the persons they come in company
with, & distribute said floor to help
about the floor & from thence on
to persons who previously had none
about them & do not desire that

P.S. These are inimical to ...
intellectual culture, ...
practical study, & as a consequence the ...

Perhaps if the author of the above ...
were to apply a little soft soap and
water to his ... and pay a little
more attention to his personal ...
and ... a little of the ...
...
It might tend to lessen the ...
of our ... would be a favor to the
...
...
...

Nov 1st 1876



MEMBERS IN 1870's

- Vocal
- Engaged and curious
- Educated and sophisticated reading
- Ownership
- Ideas
- Saw themselves as a group



BORROWER PROFILE 1881

- 46% collection fiction
- 85%-90% fiction borrowing
- Held 11,000 volumes 1881
- Circulated 32,000 volumes 1881
- Membership 700 = 45 loans per member per year
- Population of Bendigo 28,000 1881



Borrower	Loan Date	Book Num	Title	Author	Place	Publisher	date
Langford	18/02/1981	1501-1	Greece and the Greeks of the present day	About, Edmond, 1828-1885	Edinburgh	Thomas Constable	1855
Alcorn	24/02/1981	1547-1	Adventures of a young naturalist	Biart, Lucien, 1828-1897.	London	Sampson Low	1877
Andrews	5/02/1981	1557-1	Bedouin tribes of the Euphrates : v.1	Blunt, Anne, Lady, 1837-1917	London	John Murray	1879
Andrews	5/02/1981	1557-2	Bedouin tribes of the Euphrates : v.2	Blunt, Anne, Lady, 1837-1917	London	John Murray	1879
McMohan	24/12/1980	1573-1	Voyage in the 'Sunbeam' : our home on the ocean for eleven months	Brassey, Annie (Allnutt), baroness, 1838-1887	London	Longman Green	1878
Jeaks	20/12/1980	1573-2	Voyage in the 'Sunbeam' : our home on the ocean for eleven months	Brassey, Annie (Allnutt), baroness, 1838-1887	London	Longman Green	1879
Montford	18/01/1981	1575-1	Round the world in six months	Bridges, Lieut. Col. E.S.	London	Hurst and Black	1879
Scholter	28/12/1980	1575-1	Round the world in six months	Bridges, Lieut. Col. E.S.	London	Hurst and Black	1879
Cruth	25/01/1981	1585-1	Ride to Khiva	Burnaby, Capt. Fred.	London	Cassell Pettey Galp	1877
Smith, A.M.	2/02/1981	1585-1	Ride to Khiva	Burnaby, Capt. Fred.	London	Cassell Pettey Galp	1877
Alcorn	31/12/1980	1587-1	AEI : Arabia, Egypt, India : a narrative of travel	Burton, Isabel, Lady, 1831-1896	London	William Mullen	1879
Mccullagh	28/02/1981	1590-3	Great lone land : a narrative of travel and adventure in the North-West of America	Butler, William Francis, Sir, 1838-1910	London	Sampson Low	1878
Montford	5/02/1981	1590-4	Wild North land : the story of a Winter journey with dogs, across Northern America	Butler, William Francis, Sir, 1838-1910	London	Sampson Low	1873
Bickford	19/02/1981	1593-1	Across Africa	Cameron, Verney, L.	London	Dalby and Isbister	1877
Fowler	24/01/1981	1593-1	Across Africa	Cameron, Verney, L.	London	Dalby and Isbister	1877
Young, A	14/02/1981	1617-1	Marvelous country, or, Three years in Arizona and New Mexico, the Apaches' home : comprising a description of this wonderful country	Cozzens, S.W.	London	Sampson Low, Mar	1874
Drumford	14/01/1981	1652-1	Letters from high latitudes : being some account of a voyage in 1856 in the schooner yacht "Foam" to Iceland, Jan Mayen, and Spitzbergen	Dufferin and Ava, Frederick Temple Blackwood, Marquis of, 1826-1902	London	John Murray	1867
Cruikshank	22/01/1981	1668-1	English circumnavigators : the most remarkable voyages around the world	Purves, David Laing, 1838-1873	London	William P. Nimmo	1876
Langford	5/02/1981	1673-1	Leads to walk in the South of France	Ferr, Mary	London	Richard Bentley	1886



1900's

- Institute closed 1904
- Now School of Mines Mechanics Institute Public Library
- Old elite dying off, not being replaced



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Myer Sidner
Pall Mall

to folio 436

Full

Issue.	Book.	Return.	Issue.	Book.	Return.
Sept 1905	20 719 ^a	9 Feb 15	Nov.	2 795 59	Nov. 26
March	13 117	m Mar 18	-	2 263 3	Nov 11
-	18 105	m " 29	-	11 117 7	" 18
-	24 532 ^a	48 Apr 1	-	18 1161 33	" 20
-	1 497 ³	1 " 14	-	18 867 ² 1	" 20
Apr	150	m " 20	-	20 935 42	" 25
-	-	-	-	1258 4	" 22
-	-	-	-	22662 ^a 1	" 24





COLLECTION GROWTH IN VOLUMES 1856-1900

