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ABSTRACT
This review of the early history of South Australia's hospital libraries describes the social, educational and administrative factors that produced an unprecedented growth in the number and role of libraries in the state's public hospitals between 1956 and 1980. It also identifies some of the individuals who played a leading part in the development of hospital libraries during this period.

KEYWORDS
Hospital libraries; South Australia; library history

Introduction

In June 1969, Judith Lloyd, Medical Librarian at the University of Adelaide's Barr Smith Library, published an article in the Australian Library Journal on medical libraries in South Australia (Lloyd, 1969). That Lloyd could write such an article at all was a testimony to the remarkable growth in medical libraries in South Australia during the preceding decade. At the end of the 1950s, there was just one small professionally staffed hospital library in South Australia, and none in state government hospitals. By the close of the 1960s, nearly all of the then teaching hospitals in South Australia, together with several other health agencies, had professionally managed medical libraries (Lloyd, 1969, p. 175).

This review of the early history of South Australia's hospital libraries describes the social, educational and administrative factors that produced an unprecedented growth in the number and role of libraries in the state's public hospitals between 1956 and 1980. It also identifies some of the individuals who played a leading part in the development of hospital libraries during this period.

For a profession concerned with the organisation and preservation of the documented record it is paradoxical there are so many gaps in the surviving records of South Australian health libraries. All too often, minutes, correspondence and reports during the period under review are incomplete or missing altogether. Where possible the author has filled in the gaps through interviews with past and present health librarians. Nevertheless, omissions, and perhaps errors, have been unavoidable. With all this in mind, this article attempts to place on record what is known, in the hope that more evidence of our history may in due course come to light.
The Repatriation General Hospital: the first library

The first professionally staffed hospital library in South Australia was established in 1956 at Springbank (later Daw Park) Repatriation General Hospital (RGH) as part of a hospital network for war veterans funded by the Commonwealth (Federal) Government. The Repatriation General Hospital system originated during the First World War to take care of the many injured and disabled soldiers whose numbers ‘could present a medical and administrative problem of unprecedented proportions’ (Repatriation Commission, 1967, p. 38). Over succeeding decades, the remit of these Repatriation General Hospitals expanded to care for the wives and children of veterans, including psychiatric conditions. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the original hospitals were replaced by newer hospital buildings, one of which was Springbank, built as a military hospital in 1942, and termed as RGH Springbank from 1947 onwards.

As Commonwealth funded institutions, the Repatriation Hospitals enjoyed a level of financial support far beyond the State hospital system. This was especially true of South Australia, which historically has normally been a relatively poor state with a very limited economic base and small population. It can be inferred that the superior level of funding for RGH Springbank, and its participation in a nationwide system controlled by the Commonwealth government, was the decisive factor in the hospital acquiring the first dedicated hospital library in South Australia. This is evidenced by the Repatriation Commission's 1954–1955 annual report which stated: ‘Following recommendations as to the organisation of the Department’s libraries in each State … Librarians have been appointed to the RGHs in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria’ (Repatriation Commission, 1955, p. 56).

The context in which Springbank RGH appointed the State's first professional hospital librarian during the financial year 1956–1957 is particularly significant. In the post-war years the Commonwealth Government offered scholarships and training grants on a generous scale to returned servicemen and women, somewhat akin to the GI Bill programme in the United States. As a result, in 1947, the University of Adelaide Medical School had the largest intake hitherto known. Last noted:

Huge numbers of returned servicemen and women took advantage of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. There were no university quotas and anybody who matriculated and would pay the fees was accepted. Over a hundred finished the course in 1952, competing for some thirty posts at Royal Adelaide Hospital as RMOs. The rest went straight into practice, which posed few difficulties in a period of economic prosperity and rapidly expanding population. (Last, 1994, p. 294)

In an era of growing prosperity and affluence Australia, and with it South Australia, was experiencing a major expansion in health care services, hospitals and clinician numbers. This, in turn, engendered a concomitant growth in medical education and the demand for training posts in hospitals. By 1956, the Headquarters Library of the Repatriation Commission, located in Melbourne, was organising both union and state-level catalogues for the various libraries and widening its own collection to include management and office organisation (Repatriation Commission, 1956, p. 50).

The RGH Springbank Library was initially set up in two rooms in the A Block. A fascinating insight into the Library at this time is afforded through a September 1957 report by the Commission's Chief Librarian, Miss Merlie Cuzens. On 26 August 1957, Cuzens visited the Department's Adelaide office and the Repatriation General Hospital, Springbank. In her
report, reference is made to the RGH Library consisting of ‘one trained librarian, Miss Ryan, who has been there approximately ten months’ (Cuzens, 1957, p. 1). The medical library was located upstairs in the main administrative building and Miss Ryan attended the library at two periods during the day. An honour system was used by staff borrowing items, and Ryan is quoted as saying ‘that this works quite well and there is rarely any trouble’ (Cuzens, 1957, p. 1).

The library relied on three-year-old donations of the Quarterly Index Medicus from the University of Adelaide Medical School Librarian, Miss Mead. The report noted that ‘Miss Ryan has to depend heavily upon the kindness and co-operation of Miss Mead who helps her with reference problems’ (Cuzens, 1957, p. 1). The report recommended the purchase of more current reference materials, including a subscription to the National Library of Medicine’s Current List of Medical Literature, costing £8.10 pa.

Cuzens observed, one gains the impression that South Australian libraries generally are eager to cooperate with Springbank. In this State, more than in the Eastern States, there seems to exist among the general populous a very high consciousness of the ex-servicemen. (Cuzens, 1957, p. 1)

Cuzens also recommended the purchase of the pending 16th edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification as the library was still using the 1898 version. The report noted that ‘Miss Ryan usually has to ring or call one of the big libraries to obtain the relevant classification information. All this makes her too dependent upon outside assistance’ (Cuzens, 1957, p. 2). This report was compiled from a fleeting visit to Adelaide where Cuzens travelled to several departmental offices across Adelaide in a single day. Nevertheless, it does reveal that a professionally staffed library, albeit very limited in scope, was being maintained at a South Australian hospital library from at least 1956 onwards.

On 28 September 1962, the inaugural meeting of the RGH Library Committee was held. An assistant librarian of the time, Phillis Burford, is quoted by Last as saying:

The Library came under great strain over the next few years. It was a very small room and crowded with so many medical books and magazines that the librarian and myself had them stacked on chairs and around the floor. (Last, 1994, p. 293)

In the mid-1960s the library was relocated from two rooms in A Block into the old guardhouse at the hospital’s main entrance, where it has remained until this day (Last, 1994, p. 288). The advantage of having a professionally staffed library became evident during that period. In 1964, informal teaching at the RGH began on a regular basis. Sixth-year medical students came weekly as the RGH offered a wealth of clinical experience unavailable elsewhere and had the enthusiastic participation of specialists. There was also an active post-graduate training programme for specialists, of which Last wrote: ‘Appointments at RGH were popular with those seeking access to the excellent library (far better than the teaching hospitals of the day) and somewhat less hectic tempo than the busy clinics elsewhere’ (Last, 1994, p. 345).

The commencement of libraries in state public hospitals

In contrast to the Commonwealth Government funded Repatriation Commission, progress at the state government level remained sporadic until the start of the 1960s. In 1952, in its annual report, the Libraries Board of South Australia stated that it was now government policy to staff departmental libraries with Public Library of South Australia (later the State Library) officers. In 1953, Mr Peter Russell was seconded from the Public Library to take charge of the Public Health Department Library. By 1954, the omnipresent Russell was working
across the libraries of Public Health, Mines, Public Service Commissioner and the Royal Society of South Australia (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1954, p. 98).

The tempo for state hospital libraries picked up from 1957 onwards. In November 1957, a Central Library was opened in the government offices in Rundle Street, then the principal retail street in Adelaide. This Central Library provided services to six departments, including the Public Health and Hospital Departments respectively (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1958, p. 9). During 1958/1959, the IMVS (Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science – the state government pathology service) library came under the control of the Central Library and the first documented mention was made to hospital libraries: ‘and now (the Central Library is) being used by staff of The Queen Elizabeth Branch of the Department of Medicine (presumably of Adelaide University) in absence of one at the hospital’ (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1959, p. 8). In 1961, there was a further reference to the library of The Queen Elizabeth Hospital being inspected ‘with a view to the provision of a librarian on a full time basis’ (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1961, pp. 6–7). Simultaneously, a new stock room was established at the IMVS enabling the recall of several hundred IMVS journals from the University Medical Library with a new journals display, classification of the main book stock and a revised circulation system all being put into place.

The preceding references to TQeH (The Queen Elizabeth Hospital – by royal warrant the definite article is part of its name as the first hospital in the world to be named after HM The Queen) testify to it having the first library to open in a South Australian State hospital. The hospital was officially opened by the Queen Mother in March 1958, and the whole hospital was operational by March 1959. Upon opening, TQeH had 492 beds and was the University of Adelaide’s second teaching hospital after the RAH (Royal Adelaide Hospital). TQeH was equipped with ample laboratory, teaching and residential facilities, and the public patient wards were designed to encourage close interaction between physicians and surgeons (Jepson, 1959, p. 1090). In the official booklet issued to mark the 1958 opening by the Queen Mother, mention is made of a library with a cork floor, for quietness, on the second floor of the main building which was devoted to teaching and research for the disciplines of surgery, medicine, gynaecology and obstetrics. Published floor plans in the booklet (which included a nuclear bomb shelter in the basement) show a dedicated library space next to the museum and down the corridor from the lecture theatre. The Library would remain there in ever more crowded conditions for the next 40 years.

In October 1961, TQeH staff newsletter reported that Hedley Brideson, Principal (later State) Librarian, had visited the hospital to discuss with the administration the establishment of a staffed medical library (Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 1961, p. 12). By February 1962, Roland Eime was serving as librarian on secondment from the Public (State) Library. The staff newsletter stated he had 300 books to catalogue and a large number of periodicals. An appeal for stock had raised £300 (a significant sum in 1962, equivalent to $8000 in 2013 terms). The staff newsletter described the library as follows:

The services which the Library will give will be threefold: in the first place it will be used for general reading by students; in the second place it will be a source of references; and in the third place it will be a centre from which lecturers will be able to draw material for the content of their discourses. (Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 1962, pp. 6–7)

Around the same date the Libraries Board annual report stated, ‘The establishment of The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is one of the most important events of the year’ (Libraries Board
of South Australia, 1962, p. 6). It was indeed a seminal moment in the development of South Australian hospital libraries. The appointment of Eime, who served at TQEH until 1964, marked the advent of professionally staffed hospital libraries in the state's public health system.

Upon commencing at TQEH, Eime found himself in the rather invidious situation of being excluded from the Library Committee because he was not a hospital employee. There was no acquisitions budget, so all purchases had to come out of general expenditure. The Medical Superintendent, Dr R.D. Carman, was sceptical about the library's value whereas the Hospital Administrator, K.W.G. Treagus, viewed the library as a selling point for the hospital. As its first Hospital Administrator, Treagus was ambitious for the TQEH. In Eime's opinion it was Treagus who had the vision of the benefits of a professional library for the hospital. He had been recruited from the UK, his previous appointment being at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, and he was familiar with hospital libraries through his experiences with the NHS (Eime, personal interview, 3 December 2014). In order to gain acceptance, Eime actively participated in the hospital's social activities, singing in its choir and joining the hospital football team. This resulted on one occasion in Eime injuring a player during a game, who was admitted to TQEH with his medical notes reading ‘Jaw broken by librarian’ (Eime, personal interview, 3 December 2014).

The library subscribed to *Index Medicus* and some sections of *Excerpta Medica*. Eime launched a weekly contents page list of received journals circulated to medical staff. Upon request, articles in the contents list would be photocopied and supplied to the doctors. This service proved very popular and under Eime's successor, Mr L. Blacket, it became a twice weekly service. Opportunities to promote the library were seized upon. On one occasion, Dr Carman briefly visited the library. Eime enquired what he was looking for. As soon as Carman left, Roland found some relevant articles, then raced up several flights of stairs and placed the journals on Dr Carman's desk before he had returned to his office from the library (Eime, personal interview, 3 December 2014).

Throughout the course of the 1960s, TQEH Library made steady, if unspectacular, progress. Eime was replaced in early 1964 by Mr L. Blacket. The library's 1963/1964 annual report to the hospital's Library Committee observed ‘constant to heavy’ use of the library. Blacket reported an increasing number of reference queries with upwards of 15 research queries weekly, noting that ‘this would suggest that medical staff and students are making greater use of library facilities than in the past’ (Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 1964, p. 1).

In September 1964, Margaret Nunn succeeded Blacket, who left for a position in the Post Office. The next month ‘a much needed’ clerical assistant was appointed and the staff roster reorganised to permit the library to remain open more than twelve hours daily on week days as well as on Saturday mornings. The library was handling over 20 reference queries weekly and its 1964/1965 annual report remarked that ‘the three classes of people which the library has primarily been designed to serve, namely medical staff, university research staff and students, are well represented in their use of the Library's facilities’ (Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 1965, p. 1). It is notable that in these reports nurses as users are conspicuously absent. At TQEH the School of Nursing managed its own nursing library, staffed by clerical officers, and resolutely maintained its independence from control by a medical dominated Library Committee until as late as 1998.
The government libraries branch and hospital libraries in the 1960s

In April 1966, Barbara Miskelly, who would become a stalwart of South Australian health librarianship, assumed the position of TQEH Librarian, after Nunn resigned. Miskelly had commenced her career in the laboratory of Geigy (UK) Ltd in Manchester before transferring to the company library. She undertook a twelve-month certificate course in special librarianship and information work in the Department of Librarianship at Manchester College of Commerce. After migrating to Australia, Miskelly took up a cataloguing job in October 1965 at the then Public Library of South Australia (from 1967 SLSA, the State Library of South Australia). She later completed a library degree in Adelaide (Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

Miskelly's career as hospital librarian began under the aegis of the State Library's Government Libraries Branch (GLB), which was responsible for staffing and coordinating State Government departmental libraries. She was keen to escape the notorious regimentation of the cataloguing department and volunteered for secondment. She was accepted immediately, as Public Library staff saw postings to departmental libraries as akin to 'being sent to the salt mines'. Undoubtedly another factor was her special library experience and certificate from the UK (Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

Until the very end of the 1970s, the majority, though not all, of State Government health libraries were staffed and very loosely administered via the GLB, which also supplied the professional librarians for the departmental and hospital libraries. Salaries were paid by the SLSA and were reimbursed by the respective departments. Hospital librarians usually had one assistant each who was a hospital employee. The librarians reported to the GLB manager, who convened regular meetings to discuss news and ideas. The librarians at the Adelaide Children's (ACH) and Queen Victoria (QVH) Hospitals, however, were recruited directly by their hospitals and did not report to the GLB. The Branch resided in the Cox Foy's store building in Rundle Street, where the Community Welfare Library was also located. On a day-to-day basis the librarians were largely left to their own devices. The GLB facilitated transfers and assisted with problem resolution, but exercised no formal control over library operations (Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

Under a regime of this nature formal interaction with hospital administrations, other than at the ACH and QVH, was limited. There were library committee meetings and some liaison with Medical Directors, otherwise there were no official links with host hospitals. As SLSA employees, librarians did not communicate with hospital personnel or payroll units. Miskelly felt a sense of isolation and a desire to be more integrated into the institution. On the other hand, SLSA understood and recognised professional librarians in a manner which was difficult for hospital administrations, for whom librarians were largely an unknown quantity. This sense of professional identification with the SLSA was reinforced by the fact that for much of this early period of hospital libraries the only ready pathway in South Australia for professional status was through the registration examinations of the LAA (Library Association of Australia) which Miskelly, in common with others, undertook under the auspices of the State Library (Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

This lack of a direct reporting line to the host agency would work both for and against the librarian. At the joint Public Health/Hospital Departments' Library, Miskelly reported to three bosses in Health, Hospitals and the GLB. Each had different funding lines so, for example, when one department refused to pay for an Index Medicus subscription, she was able...
to secure funding from another. Conversely, sometimes no one would accept responsibility for decisions with ensuing inaction and frustration. There was a lot of interaction with clinical staff, mainly medical practitioners. Librarians conducted all of the manual literature searching. Lists of references were written out by hand, the requester selected citations and, if not held in the collection, the librarian would physically collect periodicals during biweekly visits to the University of Adelaide Medical Library. Access to photocopiers was limited in the 1960s, so often the journals were borrowed from the University Medical School Library. This could be problematic. In one instance, Barbara fetched bound volumes from the medical School Library for a TQeH doctor, only to be told upon her return that it was too late, as the patient had died (Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

The Adelaide Children’s Hospital Medical Library

The disjointed evolution of South Australian hospital libraries during this period is explicable by the fragmented nature of the state’s hospital system. Aside from the existence of a number of significant private institutions, often church-based, the public hospital system was idiosyncratic in its organisation with three separate departments (Public Health, Mental Health and Hospitals) administering the state’s health services. On top of this, two of the leading public hospitals, the ACH and QVH, were for historical reasons completely autonomous and lay outside the remit of the state public service (Forbes, 1996, p. 356).

This institutional fragmentation was evident in the origins of the Adelaide Children’s Hospital libraries, both medical and nursing. In its 89th annual report for 1964/1965, the ACH noted that a medical library opened in the Clarence Reiger Building in March 1965 (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1965b, p. 16). The background to this announcement is unusually well documented. On the evening of Wednesday 25 March 1964, a Library subcommittee of three doctors met at the residence of the Medical Superintendent, Dr Cockburn, to begin planning the new medical library. It was decided to have the library opened by February 1965 with a full-time librarian. By letter, Dorothy Mead, who at the time was in England, indicated her interest in the position of Medical Librarian upon her return later that year. The minutes recorded that ‘It was considered advisable to keep in touch with Miss Mead by letter during her absence, hoping she may consider being available to this hospital’ (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1965b, p. 16).

Owing to its independent status, the ACH was able to recruit directly its own librarian without reference to the Public (State) Library or the health authorities. Undoubtedly, Mead was approached by the ACH because she would have been well known to its senior clinicians through her previous long tenure as Medical Librarian at the University of Adelaide’s Barr Smith Library. Mead was a scholar of the Methodist Ladies College who studied English language and literature at the University of Adelaide, winning the Tormore Prize for English essays in 1923 (Adelaide University Commemoration, 1923, p. 11). She graduated in 1927 with an Honours degree in English. In February 1938, the Australian Women’s Weekly reported that Mead was one of the three women graduates appointed as library assistants at the University of Adelaide’s Barr Smith Library (Women graduates, 1938, p. 13).

In June 1964, the Australian Library Journal recorded Mead’s retirement after 25 years service as the University’s Medical Librarian. The journal noted that during her tenure, the Medical Library grew from a relatively small collection to about 42,000 volumes. Mead was succeeded by Judith Lloyd, who had joined the Barr Smith Library from the staff of the Public
Library in 1961 (Retirement of Miss Dorothy Mead, 1964, p. 93). Eime recalls Mead as being very professional and more progressive than the custodian librarian common at the time. He describes her as forward-looking, ‘interested in what was going on around her and interested in people’ (Eime, personal interview, 3 December 2014).

Throughout the course of 1964, planning for the new library proceeded with the Library subcommittee corresponding with Mead in England. At its December 1964 meeting, the subcommittee read a letter from Mead in London, dated 19 November 1964, in which she urgently requested the purchase of the Dewey Decimal Classification, *Index Medicus* monthly and the *Cumulated Index Medicus*, the latter costing $US45 for its three volume set annually. The minutes quote Mead’s letter as stating that ‘immediate ordering will be necessary in order to get these volumes in time to make use of them for the initial setting up of the new library’ (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1964, pp. 2–3). By the date of the next committee meeting on 2 March 1965, Mead had taken up her appointment and was attending meetings. At the March meeting Mead tabled a detailed list with drawings and designs for the new library, which was approved. It was also decided that all of the hospital’s books and journal acquisitions were to be centralised through the library (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1964, pp. 1–2).

The significance attached to the opening of the library in the Clarence Reiger Building during March 1965 and to Mead’s appointment is testified in the 1965 annual report of the Adelaide Children’s Hospital. It observed, ‘We were fortunate in securing as Librarian, the services of Miss Dorothy Mead, whose vast knowledge of librarianship will be extremely valuable in the reorganisation of the library’ (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1965b, p. 16). Just how important the library was viewed is also shown by the action of the Hospital’s Honorary Staff, who lent £250 (equivalent to $6600 in today’s terms), to support the acquisitions budget (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1965a, p. 1).

In 1966, Mead was appointed for a further term and continued to develop the library, which according to the 1966 annual report ‘is now extensively used by doctors, students and many other hospital groups’ (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1966, p. 14). On 30 June 1967, Mead retired after two years service, to be replaced by Elsie Ahrens (Adelaide Children’s Hospital, 1967, p. 10).

**The Royal Adelaide Hospital Medical Library**

Owing to the disappearance of many of the relevant records, the post-war history of the Royal Adelaide Hospital Medical Library is unfortunately vague and lacking in much detail. The RAH Board of Management Minutes of 11 May 1964 record a letter of 30 April 1964 from the Honorary Medical Staff, requesting the establishment of a library at the RAH for the use of Honorary and Resident Medical Staff. The minutes noted: ‘It was resolved to inform the Honorary Medical Staff that an approach has been made for the appointment of a Librarian and the Honorary Medical Staff may have access to the present library’ (Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1964a, item 10). As there had been no dedicated library at the RAH since 1896 (Hooke, 1987), the reference to the ‘present library’ is unclear. What is clear is that during 1964, the Board of Management decided to provide a professionally staffed library service, perhaps influenced by contemporary developments at TQEH and ACH. The Principal Librarian (later State Librarian) of the Public Library agreed to supply a full-time librarian ‘to organise and control the hospital library’ (Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1964c, p. 6). In June 1964, the Board...
agreed to investigate a request from the Honorary Medical Staff for medical students to be granted permission to use the library following completion of the new hospital library (Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1964b, item 2[g]).

In his history of the RAH, Estcourt Hughes states that a librarian was appointed in 1966 (Estcourt Hughes, 1982, p. 220). Regrettably, the name of the first librarian is not given. What is known is that during 1965/1966 the Commissioners of Charitable Funds, a body charged with managing philanthropic funds entrusted to the RAH, began to generously fund the library’s acquisitions budget (Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1966 p. 4). In April 1968, the Board agreed to form a Library Committee with the Board Secretary as its chair and the Librarian as Committee Secretary. The Committee’s role was to make ‘recommendations on purchasing, lending and other relevant matters’ (Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1968, item 20). Thereafter, the RAH Medical Library seems to slip into administrative obscurity until 1981, when it was named the Jepson Library in honour of Professor Richard Jepson, foundation Mortlock Professor of Surgery (Forbes, 2003, p. 99).

The Queen Victoria Hospital

The year 1968 also witnessed the establishment of a library at the Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH). In existence since 1900, the QVH was the State’s major maternity facility and, like the ACH, was completely autonomous administratively and independent of the Hospital’s Department. The inaugural of the Library Committee meeting was convened on Friday 18 October 1968 with Dr E. B. Sims as the Chair. Although the QVH Librarian was a hospital employee, the foundation librarian, Mrs M. Kirtland, attended committee meetings only as an observer, and in the early minutes was referred to simply as ‘the librarian’ (Queen Victoria Hospital, 1968a).

In her anonymous report of October 1968 to the Library Committee, Kirtland outlined the establishment of the Library. This had begun in June 1968 with the cataloguing of 210 books and 226 bound volumes, 27 journals subscribed to and new furniture, and a phone installed with a display rack and catalogue cabinet on order. A budget of $1100 had been allocated for library expenses. Medical students would be fostered to supervise the opening of the Library in the evenings, but borrowing would be restricted to the hours when the librarian was present. Kirtland concluded: ‘The library is now ready for use. It remains for the Library Committee to formulate the rules for the use of the library and for the borrowing of books and journals’ (Queen Victoria Hospital, 1968b).

By 1970, representation on the Library Committee had expanded to include nurses, and a new librarian, Jan Little, had been appointed. She would remain as librarian until her retirement in 1992, by which time QVH had merged with the ACH to form the Women’s and Children’s Hospital. Throughout the 1970s, the issue of accommodation for an increasingly cramped library exercised the Library Committee and staff. There were numerous proposals to augment library space with no resolution. Nevertheless, funding was found to appoint a second part-time librarian, Deirdre Wardle, in July 1976, to work in the afternoons (Queen Victoria Hospital, 1976, p. 1).
The Adelaide Children’s Hospital Nursing Library

Until the 1980s, South Australian hospital libraries were predominately geared towards medical staff and students. In practice, nurses were largely excluded from the remit of hospital libraries (the QVH Library was exceptional in this respect in that it catered to both nurses and doctors) and this reflected a much broader professional division between nurses and medical practitioners across the South Australian health system. In those hospitals which had nursing schools, responsibility for nursing libraries rested with the nurse educators, a situation which, in most instances, continued until nursing education moved to the university sector in the 1990s and hospital libraries became multidisciplinary in nature.

Only two hospitals in South Australia had dedicated nursing librarians in the period under review: the ACH and the RAH. The first professional nursing librarian was Elisabeth Gatehouse, who commenced in a part-time position at the ACH in 1972, reporting to the medical librarian, Gary Wilson. Initially the position was advertised as an assistant medical librarian, but it was decided that as a qualified librarian, Gatehouse would be placed in the Nursing Library which hitherto had been staffed only by clerical officers (Gatehouse & Wilkinson, personal interview, 16 December 2013).

The Nursing Library was located in a big room with book stacks, study desks and a small office, in contrast to the Medical Library which was crammed into two rooms, one with a couple of desks and display area, the other with stacks. All functions were manual until 1983 when a dumb terminal was installed to search Medline. Owing to its more generous proportions, this terminal was located in the Nursing Library in a locked room, with access confined only to the librarians (Gatehouse & Wilkinson, personal interview, 16 December 2013).

The principal users of the Nursing Library were nurse educators, nursing students and allied health professionals, with a more limited patronage by staff nurses. Nereda Wilkinson, who succeeded Gatehouse after she was appointed Medical Librarian in 1983, recalls the nurse educators ‘as being very library minded and it was their library’. The nurse educators were very possessive of their library, which included an extensive audio-visual collection produced by the hospital’s in-house audio-visual unit and which acquired a national reputation for excellence. There was a clear differentiation between the clienteles of the Medical and Nursing Libraries, with each profession rarely visiting the other library. The Nursing Library assumed an informal counselling role for nurses, offering a neutral environment in which they could express their frustrations (Gatehouse & Wilkinson, personal interview, 16 December 2013).

In 1983, the two libraries were administratively merged, introducing a new direction in the delivery of library services. Nurses were anxious about this union but were reassured by Gatehouse’s appointment as the Medical Librarian, owing to her nursing library background. The multidisciplinary Library Committee also assisted the success of the merger by its active promotion of the library service. Budget cuts and rising periodical costs were a constant struggle, with much lobbying of departmental heads to select their support in arguing the Library’s case with the administration. The departmental heads, not the professors, were the Library’s advocates and often managed to repel budget cuts (Gatehouse & Wilkinson, personal interview, 16 December 2013).
The Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) Nursing Library

The RAH Nursing Library was located on the ground floor of the corner of North Terrace and Frome Road. Managed by the RAH School of Nursing, the Library had undergone an expansion in its collection and size during the 1960s so that by 1977 some 650 students were enrolled, posing a clear need for a professionally managed library. In February 1977, Mary Peterson was appointed to the post of Nursing Librarian. In accordance with standard practice at the time Peterson was employed by the GLB on secondment until 1979, when she became an RAH employee. She then reported in common with the Medical Librarian to the RAH Chief Medical Officer (Peterson, personal interview, 10 November 2014).

The library had two staff, Peterson and a clerical officer. As the librarian, Peterson performed original cataloguing and responded to literature search requests by the nurse tutors and ward staff. She used the International Nursing Index and CINAHL in hard print. Results were either hand written or typed, with the occasional photocopies of excerpts from CINAHL. No searching was undertaken for nursing students. At first Interlibrary Loan (ILL) traffic was non-existent, and for the first five years of Peterson’s tenure only the Medical Library processed ILL requests. Over time borrowing privileges were secured at several libraries. Requests were prepared in lists, sent to supplying institutions and materials were couriered to the RAH Medical Library to be collected by hand, photocopied and distributed. The Nursing Library had its own acquisition budget and liaised with the Medical Library to avoid duplication between the two collections. The Nursing Librarian attended Medical Library Committee meetings and Peterson instituted monthly Nursing Library Committee meetings, chaired by the Deputy Principal Nurse Educator, to review purchases. Over the course of the 1980s, the Nursing Library assumed more of a staff development role as undergraduate nursing education began to move to universities. In 1994, the Nursing Library was united with the RAH and IMVS libraries into a single clinical library service (Peterson, personal interview, 10 November 2014).

Glenside Psychiatric Hospital Library

Historically speaking, the provision of mental health facilities in South Australia was poor, limited and neglected. The 1950s brought with it an increasing awareness of the needs of mental health patients. In 1962, a Chair of Psychiatry was established at the University of Adelaide with funds raised by public appeal, and training programmes for both psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses were initiated during the 1960s (Bell, 2003, pp. 83–84). It was against this background that a psychiatric library was set up at Glenside Hospital, which had been a major institution for the mentally ill since 1870. The first librarian, Kathy Roberts, left after a short appointment. In her stead Maureen Bell was appointed. Initially Bell was reluctant to accept the job because she had no subject background, but on a tour of the hospital, she saw a brand new, purpose-built library and decided to take up the position. The situation at Glenside was politically fraught as staff at the alternative psychiatric hospital, Hillcrest, resented the library being located at Glenside. Though based at Glenside, the Library was intended to give a service to all of mental health (Bell, personal interview, 11 December 2014).

To begin with there was no budget, no collection and no other library staff. As Bell wrote many years later: ‘Its role was to provide to mental health staff throughout the State, a rather
ambitious undertaking with one librarian, a few books and journals, no clerical staff and no money’ (Bell, 2003, p. 85). In June 1974, unspent monies became available and, accompanied by a psychiatrist, Bell travelled to suppliers’ warehouses in Sydney and Melbourne, spending thousands of dollars to buy mental health books. It was the start of the Glenside Hospital, and by extension, the State’s mental health collection (Bell, personal interview, 11 December 2014).

The importance of retaining the support of mental health staff was central to Bell’s work, with the Library’s remit extending to branch libraries at Hillcrest Hospital and Strathmont Centre. Most psychiatric education was conducted at Glenside, and the Library was heavily used by trainees. The Library’s operations were a mix of patient care, teaching and research, with Glenside actively participating in the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists training programme for registrars. In 1979, in accordance with the change in government policy, Bell became a hospital employee. In the 1980s, Glenside Hospital Library’s direction shifted in response to changes in psychiatric services (Bell, personal interview, 11 December 2014).

**The emergence of a new era, 1974–1980**

As the 1970s wore on new technologies were starting to manifest themselves in health libraries, and there was an emerging sense amongst health librarians that new possibilities were opening up in the provision of information. The State Library’s annual report of 1973/1974 mirrored this emerging sense of new opportunities:

> For example, the librarian of the IMVS reported he had sent 34 requests to the MEDLARS computer based medical literature services provided by the NLA (National Library of Australia). He found the service to be particularly valuable because it could search on a subject to a much greater depth and complexity than a manual search could through Index Medicus. It also had the advantage that it saved staff time. (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1974, p. 54)

In the late 1970s, Ellen Randva, a medical librarian at the Barr Smith Library, was accredited to be a MEDLINE trainer for South Australia. Initially access was only possible via ISD (International Subscriber Dialing) over the telephone network to the US, but this access expanded when the NLA provided a Canberra-based server for the Medline database. By the early 1980s, Medline was available at much more affordable interstate phone rates (Peterson, personal interview, 10 November 2014). Nevertheless, online searching was not always enthusiastically embraced. In its 1977/1978 annual report, the State Library observed that several departmental librarians reported increased usage of computer-based data searching, including Medline, at the Barr Smith Library. However, the RAH Medical Librarian gloomily reported ‘fewer requests after the introduction of charges’ and added that, as a probable consequence, ‘there was a considerable increase in the number of hand searches carried out by herself and her assistant’ (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1978, p. 54).

In the larger environment of South Australian health, major changes were also under way. Between 1967 and 1977, state government spending on health services went from second lowest per capita of any state in Australia to the second highest; at one stage, South Australia had the highest rate of hospital capital works expenditure per head in the nation (Forbes, 1996, pp. 355–356).

This surge in expenditure and accompanying burgeoning of staff and budgets created growing management problems, exacerbated by the fragmented nature of the state’s health
administration. In 1973, a Committee of Enquiry into Health Services, chaired by Sir Charles Bright, recommended the creation of a single health authority for South Australia external to the Public Service, to bring a unified control of all government funded health services. The Bright Report resulted in the establishment of the South Australian Health Commission under its own act in 1977 (Forbes, 1996, pp. 357–358). In January 1978, the respective libraries of the Hospitals and Public Health Departments amalgamated (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1978, p. 21). This served as the precursor to larger organisational change for the hospital libraries. A Public Service Board review of the secondment of State Library personnel to departmental libraries recommended the termination of the long-standing practice, and from July 1981 on government departments acquired full control of their library staff (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1981, p. 17). Testimony from hospital librarians indicates that hospitals had already begun to transfer librarians to their staffing establishments as early as 1979 (Peterson, personal interview, 10 November 2014; Bell, personal interview, 11 December 2014).

By the end of the 1970s, South Australian health librarians were aware that they were on the cusp of major technological change. There was a sense that they were escaping from traditional, decades-old manually based procedures and entering a new frontier in service delivery to library users. The perception of being information professionals, hitherto not very strong amongst hospital librarians, began to emerge more forcefully during the 1980s with widespread university education of librarians (Peterson, personal interview, 10 November 2014; Miskelly, personal interview, 23 October 2013).

Conclusion

The hospital libraries of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s were largely static in terms of technology, and service delivery operations were primarily manual in nature. There was a great deal of physical processing and timelines to perform tasks were unavoidably slower. On the other hand, hospital librarians were generally well known to their clients, their work was appreciated and they were respected for their contribution to patient care and research.

To most contemporary hospital librarians, the libraries of this period must seem extremely old fashioned, technically speaking, and their outlook remote, even quaint. However, the conditions that initiated the appearance and expansion of South Australian hospital libraries during this period have a clear resonance for modern health libraries. Undoubtedly economic and social circumstances were crucial for their emergence and development. Yet behind these broader currents were equally critical factors at a more individual level within institutions. Two elements were of equal importance in the inception, then continuing success, of all these hospital libraries. First, influential figures in the administrations of the hospitals – both clinical and managerial – supported and advocated for the concept of health libraries. Second, committed professional librarians who were resourceful and motivated to deliver excellent service to their clients were present. One of these conditions in isolation, without the other in play, would not have secured the establishment of these libraries. Yet both elements in tandem, together with influential advocates and dedicated librarians, paved the way for modern-day health libraries.
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**Interviews**

The interviews were with Barbara Miskelly (23 October 2013), Elisabeth Gatehouse and Nereda Wilkinson (10 December 2013), Mary Peterson (10 November 2014), Roland Eime (3 December 2014) and Maureen Bell (11 December 2014). Notes of interviews conducted by the author are archived on the home page of the South Australian Health Library Service (http://salus.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p20042coll1)