

People who have influenced me in my Records and Information Management Journey by Gunta Bajars MRIM

Having returned from my first Queensland Chapter Symposium with the knowledge that RIMPA would be celebrating its fiftieth birthday in 2019, and Queensland would be celebrating its forty-third Birthday, led me to reflect on the people that have made an impression both on the industry and myself. People, not technology are the core of our Industry. Technology is an aid. I feel fortunate that so many talented and passionate people have been around to guide and encourage me. I will start with those that have shaped the direction I have taken. While I may not name everyone, they have all made a difference to my journey – thank you if you are one of them.

The Late Burm Ford asked me to join Central Records from the General Office at MIM Holdings Limited. She taught me the basics of recordkeeping and about the Corporate responsibilities of a business. She started talking about Tom Lovett, Eddis Linton and something called RMAA with increasing fervour. Her copies of Archives and Manuscripts were prized and eagerly read. She hosted the first Pilot Committee that was to become the Queensland Branch. While she had no formal role in the new Branch (it was a man's world and she was due to retire soon), she was to receive Life Membership and maintain an interest until her death. Each time we spoke, I was quizzed on what was happening at work and within RMAA. When the first Records course was to commence at TAFE, I was firmly encouraged (read, pushed) to attend. Burm had retired and was no longer my Manager but was now my friend. Thank you Burm for your gift to me of Records Management and your friendship and support.

The Late Harry Haxton attended the Pilot Committee and took on roles within Queensland Branch and the Federal Council. He was one of the two teachers at that first Queensland Records Course. Some of the things that have stayed with me are: "Rubbish in, rubbish out" (translation – title a document "memo to Fred" and then try retrieving that) and when discussing Disaster Preparedness – the most important information relating to your business needs to be in your pocket diary – when the building burns down and the computers fail, where will the information you require to recreate your business be? You need the names and numbers for your bank, accountant, landlord if any, customers etc to restart your business. Seems like common sense. Harry appeared rough on the outside, but if you were privileged to get to know the real Harry, you gained a loyal friend. His passing left a large gap. In 2016 the Queensland Branch awards were renamed to the Harry Haxton Shields. He was teacher, mentor, friend and Boss to me at various times

Jim Shepherd was another member of the Pilot Committee and took on roles within Queensland and Federal Branch. A meticulous recordkeeper. He attended that first course as a student, and Jim and I graduated from that first course. Jim is the epitome of a gentleman and true friend. Always so gracious and generous with his time. He and his wife Barb are an inspirational team who support each other. Jim gave much to ensure the Branch succeeded and remains interested, even though now Retired. The Jim Shepherd Award was named to honour Jim for his contribution as one of the Association's founding fathers.

When I returned to TAFE to complete subjects in Software (Electronic Document Management Systems were making their presence felt) I met Ray Chambers and Phil Taylor, who taught these "new" subjects. Both passionate and willing to share their knowledge. Well prepared lessons which would equip us to cope with the changing and emerging Technologies. We learnt to prepare business cases. A fellow student was Nancy Taia, now Queensland Branch President.

Changes in the mining industry led to me working fulltime in the Records and Information Management Industry. I started temping in the Public Sector and found many likeminded souls. Recordkeepers can sense a kindred soul. We “get it”. It is almost a secret handshake. I was again able to attend regular RMAA events and I met Chris Simpson and Jennifer Curley who encouraged me to take a position on Queensland Branch Council and assist with Branch events. Always friendly faces, encouraging and able to provide answers to my queries. Both now retired, but still interested in our industry.

Since taking a place on Queensland Branch Council, I have been fortunate to share time with my fellow Councillors. We have come from various industries, been at varying stages of our careers, but the desire to further grow and promote RIMPA remains. We may not always share the same opinion but do share a common goal. Thank you to you all for your sharing. What has remained constant – RMAA and later RIMPA. A name change did not materially change the people that made up the organisation. Who have been the people who have shaped your journey? I look forward to those I am yet to meet!

Who has made a difference to your journey?