

Ask a librarian Librarian's Manual

1. Background Information

1.1 What is Ask a Librarian?

Ask a Librarian is a public library electronic reference service which available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It was launched as a pilot in May 2000.

Questions are sent using an online form that a participating library receives in the form of an email, which the library then replies to.

The service is not intended to be a substitute for a face-to face reference interview with a librarian at a local library, especially if advice is needed on how to research a complex subject. It is a service intended to be convenient for enquirers and librarians.

1.2 Who uses Ask a Librarian?

The service is designed primarily for Victorian residents. However, we recognise that the Internet is a global medium and therefore we do not turn away enquiries from overseas. Questions have come in from people as young as 8 years old and as old as 82.

A breakdown of the users drawn from the information that they provide is available in Appendix A.

1.3 How does it work?

Ask a librarian is a collaborative service delivered by many Victorian Public Libraries on a voluntary basis. The service is hosted and maintained by Victoria's Virtual Library <http://www.libraries.vic.gov.au>.

Questions are sent to the enquiry page, which are then automatically routed to one of the participating libraries, who receive it in the form of an email message. Librarians identify the best sources, for discovering the answer and reply back within a period of 48 hours.

1.4 What are the benefits of volunteering?

Many participating libraries view Ask a Librarian as a valuable training opportunity. It allows staff to become familiar with using email and online applications to answer reference questions.

Ask a Librarian is a shared Victorian service which will eventually be exploited, in terms of the questions asked and resources gathered amongst Victorian libraries.

Every library who has been surveyed has indicated that they would do it again. Here is what some of them had to say

“It's the way of the future- more and more queries will arrive this way and we should take this opportunity to build "response systems" based on how this works...I found it really interesting and I wish I had more questions!”

“Overall, I think it is a great idea, particularly the idea of using it to promote public libraries to the people of Victoria by referring them to their nearest library.”

“I enjoyed taking on this role.”

2. Roster

2.1 For how long do I answer the questions?

Participating libraries will spend one month answering questions from the Ask a Librarian service.

2.2 How will I know that it is my turn to answer the questions?

You will receive confirmation of your turn via a phone call. On the day of the changeover to your library service a test question will be submitted, to make sure the changeover is successful.

3. Questions

3.1 How many questions am I expected to answer?

The number of questions vary per month- November to February are quieter in comparison to the rest of the year. On average, the number of questions work out to a couple per week. Appendix A gives a breakdown of the busier months and days of the week.

3.2 What types of questions am I likely to expect?

The questions are many and varied and many relate to Victoria and Australia. There is a list of the questions in Appendix B.

4. Answering Questions

4.1 What is the time frame in which I am expected to answer their question?

A general time frame in which to reply is 48 hours. It is general as you may receive a question over a long weekend and you're unable to reply until the next

working day. You may receive a question that may take two minutes to answer, or a week.

4.2 What is preferred, Web or print resources?

You can use whatever resource is the most suitable to the question- print, WWW, Gulliver.

Web resources, though can be referred to the respondent far more easily.

4.3 Responding to Questions

The email you receive will look something like this

My Name: Cyrus Woodward

My Address: Sale 3850

My Age: 56

My Question: The Commonwealth Govt have a new Privacy Act about to come into force. Do you know its correct title

Library User: Yes

Time Sent: 2001-08-08 21:49:24

The question may not necessarily have all the fields filled in- the only compulsory fields are Name, Email Address, Library User and Question. Age and Address are optional.

Click on the reply button on your emailer, making sure that the address of the sender appears in the To: box. If it doesn't, create a new message to send and type in the destination address.

In the space for a cc put the address info@libraries.vic.gov.au.

Note: It is important to copy replies to this address as this is our way of monitoring who is using the service and what sorts of questions are being asked. This information is then summarised as Appendixes A & B.

4.4 Structuring your response

Your responses to questions should include the following elements in order to ensure consistency in delivering the service.

- Dear [name of user]
- Thank you for using Victoria's Virtual Library's Ask a Librarian.

- Copy of the original question
- Answer
 - a) Answer to the question and the source. This can be a book, periodical, database, website or anywhere else that you can judge to be a reliable source for the information. A source **must** be included.
 - b) The statement- We suggest that you contact...(organisation, address, telephone, email address) who will be able to assist you.
 - c) If the answer can only be supplied by providing documents in full or in part in some way- The information you require is available in...(journal title). We suggest you contact your local library with the details provided.
 - d) If the answer refers to a specific book title
- Best wishes,
- It is good to indicate that you are answering on behalf of Victoria's Virtual Library, as this was the entry point for their query. A signature file like this
Lynette Lewis
Victoria's Virtual Library

is appropriate.

Please see Appendix C for samples of questions previously answered by library staff.

4.5 How NOT to answer a question

This was a reply to the question "When is the best time to visit Australia?"

Consult Australia.com
<http://www.australia.com>

The response was brief and did not acknowledge the question asked, nor was there any acknowledgement that the question was answered by Victoria's Virtual Library. The librarian who answered the question did not identify himself or herself.

4.6 Are there specific guidelines as to what questions I can and cannot answer?

The service is intended to respond to questions for which there are factual answers. Questions involving original research may not be answered. The service is aimed at Victorians, but that does not preclude you answering questions from overseas or interstate, particularly if the answer relates to Victoria.

4.7 Can I refer the question to other staff in the library?

The question can be forwarded to other staff members. Please make the staff aware of turnaround times and how to answer the question.

4.8 Can I refer the patrons to another library?

Yes. If the patron is looking for a particular book, it is always a good idea to check the catalogue of their nearest library. It is also useful to make them aware of Inter-Library Loans.

4.9 Can I send them further information?

If you find further information, you can send it.

5. Statistics

5.1 Do I keep statistics?

Yes! There is attached an excel spreadsheet (Appendix D) which will give you an idea how to layout the statistics. What is wanted is

- Date, Day and Time the question was logged;
- Age and library membership details of the respondent;
- Question
- Email address
- Postcode or country or the respondent
- Who answered the question and how (i.e. what type of resources were used?)
- Time it took you to find the answer
- Time it took you to answer the respondent(i.e. turnaround time)

6. Evaluation

Your experience with Ask a Librarian is valuable, and so we would like any feedback from you

An online form has been developed to records you experiences.

It is on <http://www.libraries.vic.gov.au/dukkha/survey.html>

This is a password-protected site.

The username is dukkha

The password is samsar1

Good Luck with Ask a Librarian!

Appendix A- Statistical Breakdown of Ask a Librarian

Nature of questions –as July 2001

Genealogy –indexes online, websites, information on specific individuals **12**
 Language-learning a language, material in LOTE, installing fonts on a PC **7**
 Victoriana- information relating to Victoria eg floral emblems premiers, historic events **38**
 Australiana- Australian History, and prehistory, Australian events **30**
 Library- directional enquiries, Victoria's Virtual Library, catalogue enquiries **34**
 Literature/Bibliographic- availability of particular titles **13**
 Health- medical **3**
 Government- awards, acts, welfare enquiries, structure of government **9**
 General-everything else! **32**

Number of questions asked each month

August 2000	13	February 2001	25
September 2000	11	March 2001	27
October 2000	6	April 2001	9
November 2000	9	May 2001	19
December 2000	12	June 2001	21
January 2001	12	July 2001	5

Reason for dramatic fall in April due to Easter Holidays.

Origin of respondents questions as of 12/07/01

Victoria-		Australia	
Metropolitan	80	ACT	4
Regional	33	NSW Metro	1
Inner Suburbs	30*	NSW Regional	5
Eastern Suburbs	36	QLD	1
Western Suburbs	14	SA	1
(8 respondents, as 23 questions submitted by one person)		WA	
4			
International			
Canada	1	Ireland	1
Denmark	1	New Zealand	2
England	5	Phillippines	1
Holland	1	USA	1
Indonesia	1	Wales	2
Italy	1		

Nature of questions related to origin

Interstate questions- half related to questions regarding Victoria, including Victorian identities, early Victorian history and state emblems. Two related to Victorian libraries, namely opening hours of one branch and the availability of a VVL service, Gulliver.

Two enquiries related to genealogy, not specifically Victorian and the last two were Australian and a missing person enquiry.

Overseas

Slightly more varied, with the most popular question related to genealogy. Of these enquiries, it was largely residents from the UK and New Zealand who made these enquiries. Questions relating to Victoria and Australia were the next popular- of these history and Australian literature. Other types of questions asked were to do with Australian acts and a library. Two questions were

not related to Australia at all- but one what is premarital sex- came from an individual in a socially conservative country, and may not have been able to use the facilities of the local library to find the information.

Age of users by questions logged as of 12/07/01

The youngest user was eight years old- the eldest was 82.

The age groups were

13 and under	9	36-50	21
14-17	28	51-64	5
18-25	13	65+	7
26-35	11		

That does not mean to say that every single year 9 student in Victoria has adopted the Ask a Librarian as their de facto library. There was one individual who at one stage bombarded the Librarian with several questions that were homework questions. He was eventually referred to his local library.

Age of users by user logged as of 12/07/01

The age groups were

13 and under	9	36-50	21
14-17	7	51-64	5
18-25	13	65+	7
26-35	11		

Days questions posted as of 12/07/01

Monday	28	Friday	25
Tuesday	27	Saturday	10
Wednesday	38	Sunday	12
Thursday	29		

Peak times are midweek, with the weekends dropping off.

Times questions posted as of 12/7/01

0:01-1:00	3	12:01-13:00	12
1:01-2:00	6	13:01-14:00	8
2:01-3:00	1	14:01-15:00	14
3:01-4:00	0	15:01-16:00	8
4:01-5:00	2	16:01-17:00	10
5:01-6:00	2	17:01-18:00	12
6:01-7:00	2	18:01-19:00	10
7:01-8:00	14	19:01-20:00	3
8:01-9:00	9	20:01-21:00	11
9:01-10:00	6	21:00-22:00	3
10:01-11:00	9	22:01-23:00	10
11:01-12:00	12	23:01-0:00	5

No of questions between 7-9 am due to Sugary Fox- approximately 14 questions were asked by this user at this time, 10 of which appeared on the one day.

Eliminating the International Enquiries the times questions posted were thus

0:01-1:00	3	12:01-13:00	12
1:01-2:00	6	13:01-14:00	8
2:01-3:00	0	14:01-15:00	14
3:01-4:00	0	15:01-16:00	8
4:01-5:00	1	16:01-17:00	7
5:01-6:00	0	17:01-18:00	11
6:01-7:00	1	18:01-19:00	10
7:01-8:00	12	19:01-20:00	2
8:01-9:00	7	20:01-21:00	10
9:01-10:00	5	21:00-22:00	2
10:01-11:00	9	22:01-23:00	8
11:01-12:00	12	23:01-0:00	5

The red text indicates which times were affected. It is interesting to note that there were a number of enquiries made between 11pm and 2am that originated from Australia. The questions logged in the morning by overseas respondents were possibly during their evening.

Appendix B- List of Questions asked by Ask a Librarian-As of 31 August 2001

Victorian Specific Questions

Toorak cat burglar
Squizzy Taylor
GDP information for Australia
State Emblems of Victoria
Victorian Weather
What is the population of Melbourne?
Founder of Melbourne, Internet sites
Information on Thomastown
Number of shark attacks at Torquay
History of fishing in the Mornington Peninsula
E-mail address of J.Geritz, Berwick, 3806
Website that gives high and low tide on Port Philip beach?
List of clubs, associations and professional groups within Victoria
Birthday, place of birth and death of ex-premier Sir James Service
Unemployment in the LaTrobe valley and the impact of privatisation
Victorian Dairy industry and the impact of deregulation- Govt papers?
Founder of Melbourne, who Melbourne is named for, tallest building
George Alexander Elmslie, premier of Victoria in 1913 for 14 days-why so short? Did he die in 1918 of the influenza epidemic?
Which town in 1954 used so much electricity it was just behind Geelong and Melbourne for electricity consumption
Theories on the disappearance of Harold Holt
Population of Victoria; main industries of Victoria
What year did the Westgate Bridge collapse?
Floral, bird and animal emblems of Victoria
Map of Victoria's coalfields and power stations and solar power
Information on Bon Thomas and Bon Thomas reserve in Deer Park
Demographic information on the city of Stonnington
Mine Report, c 1920, about nugget finds in Maryborough, Victoria
Information on growing fruit trees organically in Melbourne
Info on first settlement in Victoria and early government
Any information about Maldon Primary School in Central Victoria
Who was the first woman in Victoria to ride in trousers and straddle? Believe it to be an act of protest/rebellion.
When is the best time to Visit Victoria?
Do you know of any books or reference material on the Grollo Family?
Am trying to find out the date of the bookie robbery at the Victorian Club in Melbourne in 1982.Would appreciate if you could help me.
Who were the first settlers in Ararat? Why is Ararat here? Was the town planned or did it just grow? How did it get its name? What was the history of Ararat?
I was wondering what the origins of the name Mt Donna Buang were? Is it an aboriginal word or as someone insists named after a lady called Donna?

Australian-General

The bowling action of cricketer Ray Lindwall
Sydney Olympics marketing
Immigration into Australia
List of all Australian industry support associations
Information on Fanny Durack
List or pictures of small Australian mammals
Information on dairy industry
Maps and pictures of Captain Cook's voyages for a school project?
Federation History notes please

Research on chocolate confectionery industry in Australia and Victoria
Information on the historical events of Australia for 1971 to 1980.
What did people do with the gold during the gold rush? How much was 1 ounce of gold?
What was Australia and its people like during World War one?
The Influence of the Australian environment on Australian Literature
Can I access the recent electoral roles- looking for a 20-year-old niece
1.Trace the history of Australian aviation regulations from 1921 onwards; 2.why is it safer to fly air transport today than 25 years ago

Australian- Legal/Government

Separation of powers in Government
Structure of court and decision making roles
What are Regulations of Trade Descriptions Act (1968), Fire precautions act (1971), Supply of goods & Services Act (1982)Consumer protection Act (1987), Health & Safety at Work Act (1974 &1993) of which affect a small business
Website of biographical information on public parliamentary figures
How to search for Raffle winner results
Death of Graeme Harding, drowned in 1968 and reported in Canberra Times
Information on the Youth Allowance
Feminism in Youth Policies made by the Australian Government
Federal and state electorate of Sunshine
Is there someone in the Australian Government System who can help us with the "red tape" of trying to emigrate to Australia?
The Commonwealth Govt has a new Privacy act about to come into force. Do you know its correct title

Australian- Aboriginals

How Aborigines used to pass information from generation to generation via stories or songs
How are Aborigines grouped within the main tribes?
What are the aborigines differences eg hunters farmers, fishers
How does geography play a role in the Aboriginal tribe
Are Aboriginal tribes nomadic or do they stay in one place?
Music, stories culture in the Aboriginal tribe? Who invented the boomerang and what are the techniques
What is the didgeridoo?
Was there an Aboriginal tribe that settled in the Melbourne Area?
Are there aboriginal names for landmarks? History significant events when the Europeans came?
Are there any current issues/problems? And are there any other similarities to native Canadians?
Local areas Koori inhabitants tribal names and dialect
Australian women writers, emphasis on indigenous communities

Library-General

Numurkah library hours
Brimbank online renewal possibility?
Password to library service(West Gippsland) Night shift
Date of re-opening of public libraries in 2001
Number publicly accessible terminals in Victoria; is there a database?
Information on Crescent Library, Ascot Vale; trade register of small libraries
Procedure for acquisition of documentary films in libraries in Melbourne
Information on Korumburra library-opening hours, email
Women's library in Melbourne- looking for info on artist Jill Orr
Can I use Gulliver?
Marine Modelling Magazine issues- interchange system
Are there slides available for borrowing or viewing (of art)
Library Week activity for ESL students; website about libraries
An email contact for passing on requests
How do I book a book over the Internet?
Website for Monash Public Library- has it gone down?

Will libraries accept members not living in their municipality? Does each library require a separate member card? What is happening to Boroondara's online catalogue?
Do libraries in Victoria keep a record of all book titles or subjects borrowed by individual members? If not, will this happen at any stage? If yes, can borrowers request a copy of their personal borrowing record? Would cooperate org'ns such as major book retailers have access to member info for marketing purposes ie would they have the postal address and the most frequently borrowed subjects of each library member?
Why do we have to pay money for reservations? Where does the money go?

Library-Bibliographic

Access to medical journals
Bird Identification database on cd
Original text & source Camus "Invisible Summer"
Copy Book Hatchet by Gary Paulsen available
Books on WD Gann Theory eg "45 years in Wall Street", Gann made Easy",
Autobiography of Rai ... of English/Irish heritage
Book "Julia Kristeva:Interviews" by Ross Guberman
Book "Community building on the web" by Amy Jo Kim- available at Camberwell or Gisborne libraries?
Where to obtain French literature, journals, newspapers, novels etc
Books "old Peter's Russian tales" by Arthur Ransome, "Victorian Women-" by Ina Taylor and biography on Sir Stanley Baldwin
Title of a book on Gippsland mining days which mentions Bridget O'Malley
Information/Statistics/listing of rural and suburban libraries online
Info on 1979 Volvo manuals
Access to agricultural journals
Book search "selling a consultative approach"
Travel videos available at Kilmore or at any other library
Hidden in full view-book enquiry
Could you please list Australian Authors
How many books are there on Ned Kelly in Victorian Libraries

Libraries- Searching Tips

Can I search for books online? Looking for a book at Boroondara and don't know how to use the catalogue
A central library catalogue online-searchable for books to be sent to local library
Is there an online facility to do a single search of all Victorian Public Libraries for a particular book?
I have to write an essay on this topic "Discuss the ways in which animals adapt to low oxygen environments" and I'm only allowed to use journals. I just don't know under which topic can I search through the journals
I need some information on sourcing things that are older than 10 years and closer to 20 years
Why is it so hard to search for holdings of The Age newspaper at any of the State's public libraries online catalogues. How should I search please. I have become so frustrated. Please tell me the search terms I should put in.

Libraries- Victoria's Virtual Library

What is the Virtual Library? Please explain characteristics
Question about document on VVL's Infonet
Sunbury local paper- availability on net/library
Old newspaper articles on VVL?
Where can I get the full papers from the Open Road (Multilingual Web Design)Conference held last year please?

Genealogy

Online genealogy links
Stained Glass window dedicated to Henrietta & Lydia Pearce in MELB church
Ships and passenger lists UK-Australia 1895 to 1914

Availability of biographical index online- to check reference to Richard Dowling who died in 1920 and was referred to in the Australian Pastoralist Journal.

Cemetery Records of Merri Creek residents

Info on William Henry Hawkins, b 1855 en route to Australia

How to access the National Ancestral Database?

Information on Algernon Darge, (family friend/relative)

Victorian records of births, deaths and marriages in 19th century

Is the Catherine House index available online?

I would like to know of websites available to research my maternal family tree. I know the family lived in Geelong during the mid-late 1800's and that they came from Cambria (Cumberland) in England. Is there any records of births, deaths and marriages?

I'm after archives can I access on the Internet births, deaths in Victoria

I am looking for the copies of the NSW parish registers that were filmed by the SAG. I have the reel number but at this point it looks like a trip to Sydney to look it up The church is St James c 1839

Information-General

How do you build a billycart

What is skeet?

Card games websites

Missing person enquiry

Information on "Popstars" and "Survivor"

Information on ducks

How fast is a cheetah?

What is an interesting fact on the Southern Cross

Three interesting facts about Orion's belt

Five interesting facts about Southern Cross, Alpha and Beta Centauri

What is the relationship between the tides and the moon's phases

What causes the seasons

Are there Aboriginal legends on Orion, the Southern Cross, Alpha and Beta Centauri

When is Arbor Week in 2001

How are non-pareils (hundreds and thousands) made?

What are high and low tides and how do they occur?

What is the biggest and lowest tides in the world

What is a neap tide and when does it occur?

What is a spring tide and how does it occur?

What are high and low tides and how do they occur?

Statistical info on people with disabilities worldwide?

Websites on Paris and France

Information on monkeys

Where can I email people for information on Snow Leopards?

Can you send me cars, Britney Spears, Christina, Linkin Park

Ownership of property of women in the 1800's

Information-Business related

Positive and negative aspects of Human Resource Management in large organisations

What is the award rate for child minding

government electronic trading

Manufacturer details of RHOYXON (Italian)

Theses on supplier evaluation, requires details on supplier rating

What does HIH stand for?

Where does one go for warranty insurance as a owner-builder?

Where can I obtain scientific information on lights and lighting. Prefer any and all info on currently used lighting applications, how they work, who uses them. More specifically commercial applications, ie office lighting, supermarkets etc.. I am interested in innovations in fluro's too. Thank you for any help in this matter.

Language-related

Where can I learn Bulgarian?

Latin Pronunciation Vivat and Regina

Word meaning small or little in Apache
Difficulty in installing Russian fonts to view Russian websites and openroad
Information on learning to speak English
How do I get Spanish translated in to English and availability of Yiddish in libraries

Technical

Website with layout formatting for submissions, opinions testaments
How does a microwave work

Medical

Lead poisoning; cases, level it becomes poison
Antidepressant medications Efexor, Zoloft and their similarity to Tegretol?
What is premarital sex?

Appendix C- Sample Answers from Ask a Librarian

1. In relation to a medical query

Dear George,

Thank you for sending your question.

I have located some information in several books which I will include in this e-mail. The main message I found is to discuss the use of the medications together with your doctor.

Rybacki, James J. & Long, James W. 'The essential guide to prescription drugs.' 2000 ed. New York: Harper, 1999.

p.164 - Carbamazepine (Tegratol) - may decrease the effect of antidepressants.

Mackenzie, Frances. 'The penguin guide to medicines: the complete Australian reference to prescription and non-prescription drugs.' Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 2000.

p. 592 Venlafaxine - 'Don't use with: *Monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, *any other prescription or non-prescription medicines, including herbal medicines, without consulting our doctor or pharmacist.'

p.593 'NOTE: Venlafaxine has not been tested for interactions with other drugs. Inform your doctor without delay if you develop any unexpected or unusual symptoms while taking venlafaxine with other drugs, including herbal medicines.

p.167 'Carbamazepine may interact with many other drugs, including St. John's Wort. Carbamazepine dose may need adjustment during treatment with other drugs. Make sure your doctor knows about every drug, including herbal medicines, that you use regularly or might use occasionally while taking carbamazepine.'

p. 592 Venlafaxine - 'Don't use with: *Monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, *any other prescription or non-prescription medicines, including herbal medicines, without consulting our doctor or pharmacist.'

p.593 'NOTE: Venlafaxine has not been tested for interactions with other drugs. Inform your doctor without delay if you develop any unexpected or unusual symptoms while taking venlafaxine with other drugs, including herbal medicines.

Drummond, Edward H. 'The complete guide to psychiatric drugs: straight talk for best results.' New York: John Wiley, 2000.

p.166 Carbamazepine - 'Drug Interactions. Do not use if you take: Clozapine; MAOI antidepressants. Use with extra caution if you take: Anticonvulsants, antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotics, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, or any drug that causes sedation or central nervous system depression, because the combination can cause pronounced sedation.'

p. 262 Venlafaxine - 'Drug Interactions. Do not use if you take: Other SSRIs, St. John's Wort, or tryptophan or other serotonin reuptake inhibitors, as their use with venlafaxine can cause the serotonin syndrome, which consists of potentially dangerous alterations in pulse, blood pressure, hyperactivity, and mental status changes; MAOI antidepressants, as their use with venlafaxine can cause a serious, sometimes fatal, reaction of agitation, fever, cardiovascular changes, and mental status change.'

You can find these books at your local library if you would like to check the information for yourself. Your local library is the Yarraville Library, 32 Wembley Avenue, Yarraville. Ph: 9688 0294

2. In relation to a legal question

Georgene Hensel,

Thank-you for using Victoria's Virtual Library website for your enquiry.

May I suggest two places that you should be able to get help with your immigration questions.

The first is at the Australian Diplomatic Office in Los Angeles (19th Floor, Century Plaza Towers, 2049 Century Park East, Los Angeles, California 90067-3238)

Their telephone number is 1 310 229 4800 (ACG); 1 310 229 4840 (DIMA); The telephone is manned between the hours of 0845-1700 Monday to Friday. They also have an email address at dima-los.angeles@dfat.gov.au

This Office, run by the Australian Embassy, processes permanent entry visa applications from the following states Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, US South Pacific Territories, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. They should be able to help you with your application and any further questions that you may have.

Alternately information about Australian residency can be gained from the following Australian Government Internet site:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/>

I hope this information helps.
Good Luck with your move to Australia.

3. Question answered by a list of URLs

Dear Cathryn,

Thank you for contacting Victoria's Virtual Library about information on snow leopards. Please find attached sites that have information about snow leopards.

<http://www.mmzoo.org/animals/leopard.html>

Information provided by the Mill Mountain Zoo.

http://www.allsands.com/Science/Animals/snowleopardmo_sma_gn.htm

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Meadows/4059/index.html>

This site has information and photographs. The person who created the site encourages people to e-mail him.

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/uncia/u_uncia

Information provided by the University of Michigan.

<http://universalguide.com/naturelive/naturelive-leopards-3.htm>

The Universal Guide to Snow Leopards. By clicking on the links you will be able to get information from three separate sources on snow leopards.

The following page gives email addresses for various Melbourne zoos:

<http://www.zoo.org.au/contact.htm>

<http://www.zoo.org.au/Education/>

I hope this information is of a help to you.

4. In relation to a genealogy question

Dear Mr Weaver,

If you don't know which state your relatives went to, or which year they left Britain, this could be hard to trace from Britain. A standard book by Nick Vine-Hall called "Tracing your Family History in Australia ; a guide to Sources" ; (Scriptorium Family History Centre, 36 Ferrars Street, Albert Park, Australia) states "trying to find references to ancestors in Australian shipping records can prove very frustrating. The main reasons for this are that not all arrivals are indexed, and those which are indexed are not all listed in one sequence. Some indexes are published and some are not. There are literally dozens of indexes to be checked for the pre-1900 period in New South Wales alone". His web site is at

<http://www.vinehall.com.au/main.html>

There is also a good web site at:

"How to Find Shipping and Immigration Records in Australia : A Shipping Starter Sheet" at

<http://www.coraweb.com.au/shipshee.htm>

As you'll see each state has its own sources of records. Most of the records searchable on the Internet are for the years before the ones you are interested in. (eg. The State of Victoria has its shipping records online at the Public Records Office site at <http://www.cohsoft.com.au/db/about.html> - but only for the years 1852-1879). This is a "work in progress" and the later records may be put up on the web at some stage.

See also <http://shipping.cohsoft.com.au/db/britship.html>

I have also copied some information from the National Archives site at <http://www.naa.gov.au> "Passenger lists:

Passenger lists document the movement of people into and out of Australia. The master of each passenger vessel and aircraft arriving in, or departing from, Australian ports was required to provide authorities with a list of passengers disembarking and embarking from that port.

The Commonwealth government assumed responsibility for passenger arrivals and departures in 1923, so our holdings date mostly from 1924. Although we do hold some records dating back to the 1850s (outlined on Fact Sheet 38) earlier records are generally held by the relevant State archives.

Unfortunately, there are no name indexes for passenger records. To search for family members effectively, it is necessary to know the year, month and the port or State where they landed. Passengers were listed under each ship so knowing the ship's name is also useful when searching these records. If you are unable to identify the date of arrival within two months, your search could be very time-consuming."

The site has useful fact sheets about migration/shipping etc. at http://www.naa.gov.au/publications/fact_sheets/default.html#genealogy.

There is a useful book by Cora Num, which is called"

How to Find Shipping and Immigration Records in Australia, the author, ACT, 1996. It should be available at good libraries.

Another print resource which should be held in major libraries is:

Peake, A.G. National register of shipping arrivals, Australia and New Zealand. Australian Federation of Family History Organisations, 3rd. ed. 1993.

I'm sorry there is no quick or easy way to trace your relatives but this may help. Good luck!

5. Sample of a referral to another library

Dear Alex

Thankyou for your inquiries. We are unable to answer that number of questions, so I am giving you details of your local public library and a useful source of information. The book would best answer all your questions is the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia. The Port Phillip Library Service is your closest library service. All the branches listed below have copies.

The branch addresses and contact details are as follows:

Albert Park, 319 Montague St, Albert Park. Ph. 9209 6622
Port Melbourne, 147 Liardet St, Port Melbourne. Ph. 9209 6644
St Kilda, 150 Carlisle St Kilda. Ph. 9209 6655
Emerald Hill, 195 Bank St, South Melbourne. Ph 9209 6611

They each have a copy of the title. The Albert Park, St Kilda and Port Melbourne libraries also have a CD-ROM version. Vicnet also have a page for Aborigines page at the following address which would be worth looking at.

<http://cf.vicnet.net.au/aboriginal/>

I hope this information is of assistance