

that I had to settle the line of my responsibility. The point at issue was a minor one – whether the secretary of the National Library Service had the right to dress down a member of my staff who arrived late at work – but it seemed to me that there was an important point of principle. My contention was that, if I was to be responsible to the Librarian of the National Library Centre, such interference was not acceptable. This view prevailed, and was perhaps an essential, if not terribly important, step in the right direction.

As the functions of the Country Library Service were increasingly decentralised, the concept of a national centre, with a distinctive type of collection and distinctive aims of service, became gradually clearer. It was important, during this period, that the person in charge of the centre was one who by instinct was a denizen of a traditional national library, for that ensured that, when the National Library was established in 1966, there was a good general central organisation that could stand as high as the special collections, the Turnbull Library and the General Assembly Library. This was important, not only so that the general was not swamped by the particular, but also because there were those at the centre who understood and agreed with the values of the specialists.

Towering above all of Graham's other achievements was the retrospective national bibliography. In his 'Reflections on Some Unfinished Business',¹ published in 1977, Graham wrote, after detailing all the other things he had had to do over the years,

You may well ask, if there were so many would it not have been better to have left the bibliography to someone else? I am not the one to answer this now but I will say only that the task throughout those 20 years was not merely a faithful interest to which I longed to return when elsewhere involved but also an anchor of absorbing preoccupation, even an assurance of sanity. When I first discussed the project with Geoff Alley his perceptive query was: 'Do you want to do this yourself, or do you merely want to see it done?' My debt is still to the bibliography which obligation has to be discharged in the time left as best I can.

This passage says a lot about Graham. His bibliographical and historical expertise reached the pitch where it was a source of pleasure to himself in the way that a top athlete is elated by a first-class performance. I remember once referring a manuscript to him for comment and marvelling at the skill and speed with which he hit on weak points and checked them against an astonishingly varied range of publications, all in his own collection. This was his life, as they say.

The same passage also says a lot about Geoff Alley. Each of these men, so different in many ways, was the best kind of guide for a young librarian in the difficult art of administration. Each was able