

OBITUARY: BARBARA BURTON (1930-2009)

It is a sad duty of the editor of ARD to write the obituaries of distinguished predecessors in African Studies Librarianship. Barbara Burton was one of those who encouraged me in my early days in SCOLMA.

Barbara was born a Yorkshire lass, read Modern Languages at Somerville and proceeded steadily up the career ladder. She gained professional experience in several parts of the University of London – Bedford College, Queen Mary and the University of London Library as well as the University College of Wales and the University of Sussex. This conventional university library career path was varied and enriched by time at the Association of Electrical Industries, work experience in Boston and wide travels in North America. If she lacked Area Studies experience when she was appointed Librarian of SOAS in 1983 (a post she occupied until 1992), she quickly set to work to fill in the gaps and make her contribution there too. She soon joined the SCOLMA committee and served as our Treasurer from 1985-1988, keeping us and our finances in order, with quiet efficiency. She relinquished this office only because of increasing commitments to the National Council on Orientalist Library Resources (NCOLR). Barbara was a rather reserved person who combined Yorkshire pragmatism, with an old-fashioned courtesy and a dedication to her work that was legendary. SCOLMA honours her memory.

Terry Barringer