

Vale Aina Birnitis

25 August 1923 to 24 August 2009

Aina joined CSIRO on 2nd March 1970 as Librarian of CSIRO's Division of Protein Chemistry, Parkville site. Previously, Aina was Deputy Medical Librarian at the Brownless Medical Library, University of Melbourne. During her 17 years managing the Parkville library, Aina took an active part in introducing changes and enhancements to the library services at Protein Chemistry. A significant enhancement included making available direct online information searches that had hitherto been available through cumbersome offline processes, and only through third party liaison. It included also a streamlining of those technical processing services, including cataloguing, that enabled the delivery of onsite library services. Aina was well-informed about the various research projects carried out within the Division, and took a lively interest in the scientific achievements of the scientists whose work she supported.

Aina was a very private person. She had a high intelligence, informed by reading widely. She enjoyed classical music and travel (Italy, particularly Florence, was a favorite focus). The apartment in Carlton where she lived for many years before her death was selected for the ease of access it gave to follow those interests. She enjoyed her walk to shop, to have a coffee, to attend a film at the Nova cinema in Lygon Street. Aina also enjoyed the bustle of the Queen Victoria Market, and its array of delicacies that included some European favorites reflecting her Latvian birthplace.

Aina left CSIRO Division of Protein Chemistry on 18th November 1987 to retire. She continued to live in Carlton, where she died very recently at her home.