

Literature requests

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This month we concentrate on requests for information on literature: poetry, drama, short stories and novels. How often don't we hear 'I learnt a poem at school. I can't remember the author or title but it was about x y z', or as we had recently, 'I heard this line of a poem on the radio/television last night. Can you identify the poem?' For poems in English my first port of call has always been **Granger's index to poetry** when I am trying to find the author as it indexes poems by first line and key word. Once one has an author and a period you can start looking through the anthologies in your stock, as the anthologies indexed in Granger's are very old and unlikely to be available. Unfortunately our Granger's dates back to 1953, so more modern poets will not be included.

Questions to ask a borrower who is looking for a specific poem:

- Is the author British, American, South African?
- During which period did he write, for example, Victorian, early 20th century, war poet?
- For children or adults?
- Theme of poem so one can search appropriate anthologies of love, war, animal, Christian, sea... poems?
- Is it a prescribed poem? If so, it is likely to be in one of the prescribed anthologies such as **Inscapes**, and one may find information on the poems in one of the study guides.

We have discovered a quicker route for non-South African poetry queries. Visit the poetry chat room at www.emule.com/2poetry/phorum and post your query. We had an overnight answer to ours.

One must, of course, listen very carefully and ask a borrower to spell a name if he is able, for example, the author of **Abandoned bundle** was not Charley but Mtshali.

Afrikaanse gedigte is meer problematies. Die register van Afrikaanse poësie is reeds

in 1958 uitgegee, dus sal slegs ouer gedigte en bundels daarin geïndekseer word. Vir kontemporêre digters moet 'n mens staatmaak op personeel se geheue en die goeie outydse manier van soek deur elke boek, byvoorbeeld, by Hansie Cronjé se begrafnis is 'n reël uit 'n gedig van T.T. Cloete aangehaal: *Nooit had so baie jou so lief soos in jou kis nie*. Die enigste manier om die gedig waaruit dit aangehaal is, op te spoor, was om deur elke gedig in elke bundel van die skrywer te soek tot ons dit gekry het - *Allofrase* in die bundel **Allotroop**.

Eisteddfodtyd besorg gewoonlik kopsere, byvoorbeeld, ons soek nou nog na die gedig, *Die spookhuis*. Kinders soek gereeld 'n gedig oor 'n onderwerp, byvoorbeeld, 'n dier, die see, 'n blom... Ons het lank gesoek na 'n bundel in ons voorraad waarin AG Visser se *Muskietejag* opgeneem is.

Wanneer ons nuwe studiegids van voorgeskrewe dig- of kortverhaalbundels katalogiseer, word die inhoud van die gids op die rekord aangebring. 'n Soektog na die titel van 'n gedig of verhaal sal dus die skrywer oplewer.

Our local reporter recently asked me for the author of a short story, **The herb garden**, which she had read at school. I found the author, William Saroyan, in the

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Short story index (1953). South African short stories and particularly Afrikaans ones, are not indexed and again one has to rely on memory and endless searching - and probing questions for clues.

A good example of how important detailed contents on a catalogue record are, is illustrated by requests for plays, especially South African ones. Some of our older

BRAINTEASERS

Brainteasers provides the answers to the everyday questions received by librarians. Use it for obtaining and providing the answers

PALS records are incomplete when it comes to analytical contents cataloguing, for example, the CPL record for **Theatre one: new South African drama** does not give the contents of the volume.

We had a request for a play called **Oleanna** which we could not find and which I subsequently checked in a **Play index** at Central Library and found the author, David Mamet. It was prescribed for the University of Cape Town's students and a copy was later ordered for us.

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Christmas plays are seasonally in demand and again, in-depth indexing makes them easily accessible on PALS.

Biografiese inligting oor skrywers, veral Suid-Afrikaners, en resensies oor hulle werk word veral deur skoliere, studente en leeskringe gesoek. Ons het 'n uitgebreide knipselversameling waarin artikels uit koerante en tydskrifte met biografiese inligting en resensies opgeneem word. Die inligting verskyn nie in boeke nie en die versameling is dus 'n onontbeerlike verwysingsbron.

Sulke navrae hoef dus nie noodwendig kopsere vir bibliotekarisse te veroorsaak nie. Die bronne tot jou beskikking, jou navorsingsinstink en natuurlik 'n bietjie geluk sal menige tevrede gebruiker met 'n glimlag huis toe stuur.

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