

JUST THE SAME

An Editorial

We are always looking for turning points: ends of epochs, dawning of new eras, anniversaries, jubilees, fresh beginnings. This issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* is a turning point: the last Number of Volume 6, the Volume where the Australian Society of Archivists took over from the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia. So was Volume 6 Number 6 a turning point: the first issue produced by the A.S.A.; so was Volume 6 Number 5 a turning point: the last issue produced by the L.A.A., the last edited by Robert Sharman, the twentieth anniversary of the journal . . . ; so it goes on. Choose whichever you like. Everything has some claim to be a hinge of history. For this reason when Volume 6 Number 6 appeared I spared our readers, and saved myself the trouble of writing, a sententious piece on the Path Ahead; after all, your guess is as good as mine.

Yet here I am, set to discourse on the subject. My only excuse is that an observation may be due on the effects, present and future, of the change of publisher of this journal from the L.A.A. to the A.S.A. The astute reader will discover that in its essentials it is just the same. There have been changes, of course, and there will, to use the rhetoric of the day, continue to be changes; but I suspect, and I hope, that even when an *Archives and Manuscripts* without the slightest physical resemblance to this present issue appears, glossy beyond belief, perhaps, and replete with colour pictures of Australia's leading archivists, it would still be there primarily to publish and encourage scholarly or thinking contributions to the fund of knowledge and experience of the amorphous world of Archives.

For this reason and also because this journal can only appear twice yearly for the present, the effluvia and day to day preoccupations of the Australian Society of Archivists do not appear here, but rather in the Society's more ephemeral two-monthly *Bulletin*. As an exception, this issue contains a note on the Society, for the record; a report by the Society's Vice-President Ian Maclean on the Eighth Congress of the International Council on Archives which he attended in Washington D.C. last September and which is obviously of wide interest; and a By-law and explanatory note published here according to the rules of the Society.

While I have this page to myself, I would like to draw attention to two book reviews appearing in this issue, of Volumes 9 and 10 of the U.S. National Archives Conference series. Six previous volumes have been reviewed in the pages of this journal, and another will be reviewed in the next issue. The conferences which have been held at least annually, sponsored by the U.S. National Archives, each involve a different area of historical research. Papers are given describing the availability of the source material in the Archives, and these are followed by research papers based on the material under discussion. Both reviewers point out that there are important neglected archival sources in Australia which deserve to be given this type of attention, while John Burke in the article that now follows demonstrates what

all archivists will confirm from their own experience that the attention of most researchers is focussed on a very small proportion of total holdings. So, who cares about cultural cringe?—here's one idea worth pinching from America. It is time we opened up some of those dark recesses.

A. G. F. L.