

EDITORIAL

The Australian Society of Archivists owes a great debt to Andrew Lemon, the Society's Editor from 1975 until May of this year. These were the formative years of the Society and it was important, therefore, to establish and to define its separate identity. The Society's publications, *Archives and Manuscripts* and the *Bulletin*, were important means of achieving this objective and it is to Andrew Lemon's credit that he guided these publications so capably through this crucial period.

This year, 1979, has been an important one for Australian archivists and their Society. In May, the A.S.A. held its Second Biennial General Meeting and Conference; in October, International Archives Week was celebrated in Australia. In almost every Australian state, small and large initiatives are taking place in archival and manuscript repositories; some of these developments are described in the *News Notes* published in this journal. Significantly, 1979 marks also the 25th anniversary of the visit to Australia of Dr. T. R. Schellenberg of the U.S. National Archives and Records Service. Dr. Schellenberg's visit to Australia stimulated him to produce *Modern Archives*, an archival text which is internationally renowned and which is still of great relevance today. Equally important for Australia, however, is the stimulation to archival thinking and practice in this country which Dr. Schellenberg's visit occasioned. While some of the developments which Dr. Schellenberg advocated have taken a long time to eventuate, it is obvious that the methods and the concerns of Australian archivists have changed dramatically in the last quarter century.

The past development of archives in this country and the present and future issues facing Australian archivists were important themes at the A.S.A. Conference in May and are evidenced by the three articles in this issue which derive from the Conference. The first is Gerald Fischer's Presidential Address. The second is Dianne Patenall's introduction to the Records Management session, which deals with the experience of the Records Management Office of N.S.W. over the last three years. The third is John McMillan's paper, on the Freedom of Information and Archives Bills, which he was unable to deliver at the Conference.

Conservation has been a prominent theme in *Archives and Manuscripts* over the last few years. This issue contains a very useful article by Timothy Walsh on the design and equipping of a conservation laboratory.

In August 1979, an International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies was held in Perth. Margaret Medcalf's article is about that strand of the Conference which was devoted to Archives and Resources for Study. Although the conference was attended by over 40 archivists from almost as many countries there were, regrettably, few Australian archivists participating. One of the important issues raised at the Conference was the removal of colonial documents to the colonising countries, a matter which is of particular concern in the south-west Pacific at present. A disturbing note of warning was sounded in Dr. Andrew Forbes' paper on the Maldive Islands, in which he indicated that contemporary economic imperialism can also result in the destruction or removal of the evidences of the indigenous national heritage.

Australia 1788-1988: A Bicentennial History is a project most archivists and manuscript librarians in Australia are rapidly becoming familiar with. The *Bulletins* produced by the project's working parties have already included a number of articles utilising, or about, manuscript and archival sources. In this issue, Dr. John McQuilton presents a progress report on the Historical Bibliography Reference Volume, an aspect of the project with which the A.S.A. and many archival institutions are already involved.



ASA Biennial Conference, Sydney, May 1979. (l. to r.) Olga White, Conference Convenor; Judith Hornabrook, National Archives, New Zealand.