

Editorial

As this issue goes to press, the Adelaide Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists is making final preparations to play host to the Fourth Biennial Conference. The first conference was held in Canberra in 1977, and although a prolonged air strike almost disrupted proceedings, most of the intending participants who were able to make alternative arrangements managed to get there. Sydney was the venue in 1979 and it was there that some of us heard a first-hand account of the Bi-centennial History Project then not long launched. In 1981 members of Melbourne Branch were the hosts and provided another exciting programme.

While proceedings of a conference can be published and read attentively by all, and while decisions handed down from a biennial general meeting can be put into effect, further discussed or disputed by correspondence or telephone, these provide no compensation for attending the conference itself. Conferences give the chance to put a face, and more importantly, a personality and character to the hand, with which you have been corresponding, or, which wrote the article you have found so interesting, or boring or whatever. No amount of professional reading, if done in isolation, quite substitutes for face-to-face communication with one's professional colleagues.

Professional theory applied to one environment may not seem to work in another. One's own environment tends to dominate one's thinking and action. It is necessary occasionally to get away from it and look back from a distance. If one can do this with the assistance of a professional colleague who is providing a fresh point of view, then one may return with some illumination on, and even possibly a solution to, a particular problem.

Apart from the professional aspects, a conference offers the time to establish or renew friendships, to visit new places and institutions, and to marvel at changes if it is some time since one was last there. It can be a warm and happy time to be eagerly anticipated. We hope to see you in Adelaide.