

FOREWORD

In the long series of apologies that have prefaced issues of *Explorations*, the one I wrote for number 15 of December 1993 (published in fact in the second half of 1994) has proved to be the most hopelessly inaccurate and optimistic. Thus it is after a gap of three years that we resume the process of bringing our magazine up to date. In addition I have to report that, far from leaving the Editorship at the end of 1995 to devote myself to the *History of the Book in Australia*, I am still around—at least until I have made amends for an appalling hiatus.

The reasons for the delay are more complex than what may look like editorial torpor. On the one hand, the active members of ISFAR are a quite small band and they have severally been involved in some of the traumatic changes that have affected Australian public institutions in the mid-1990s. Collectively they have kept the Institute going and they have given it a new constitution as an incorporated body. Details of this are being circulated with this number. On the other hand, apart from regular contributions by the indefatigable Edward Duyker, nothing was submitted to the Editor for a long period. Since my own occupations—overseas leave and other research—precluded writing quick fillers, a time of silence was unavoidable.

Happily we can now look well beyond all this. Three substantial papers based on the material reported by Colin Nettelbeck in "The Consul's Treasure" (*Explorations*, n° 7, December 1988, pp. 18-23) will form the substance of three issues to follow quickly on the heels of the present miscellany. A little further off we envisage at least one more number on the interesting group of French consular officials active in the Australian colonies in the late nineteenth century. In this way we hope—after all our vicissitudes—to keep faith with our subscribers.

W. K.