

FOREWORD

Explorations n° 44 is the first issue produced by the new editorial team, supported by the Editorial Committee and the Advisory Board. It is now official policy, including for n° 44, that all articles (as distinct from essays, notes, book reviews, etc.) will be peer-reviewed. The Editors also expect that the journal's regular publication schedule will be restored by the middle of 2009.

Readers will discover a combination of innovation and continuity in *Explorations'* new series. The most obvious change is the new cover, more modern in style, designed by Judy Worthington. It indicates the desire of the editorial team to welcome more contributions on contemporary subjects, without however sacrificing the journal's traditional historical interests.

The opening article of n° 44 is Jana Verhoeven's study of Max O'Rell's lecturing tour in Australia and New Zealand in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. This article had been submitted and accepted before Jana came on board as co-editor with Ivan Barko. It deals with national stereotypes as seen by European, American and Australian audiences, moderated by the visiting lecturer's wish to please and entertain his public. O'Rell, whose true name was Paul Blouet, used humour to describe and criticise albeit gently the major Western nations and their idiosyncrasies. An interesting observation is the extraordinary popularity of lecturing as a form of middle class entertainment in those pre-radio and pre-television days.

Margaret Barrett's article focuses on the last French nuclear tests in the Pacific in 1995–1996. Australian opposition to nuclear testing in the Pacific was by no means new: however, after the suspension of testing during President Mitterrand's second term, Australian public opinion was unprepared for the resumption of the tests by Mitterrand's successor, Jacques Chirac. Hence the intensity of the Australian protest, which proved to be particularly effective not only at home but also internationally. The final section of the article deals with some uncomfortable truths, namely the verbal and occasionally physical violence to which Australians of French background and other French residents were subjected by their fellow citizens in 1995, even when they were themselves opposed to the tests and to President Chirac's policies. From every angle those were ugly months.

I.B.