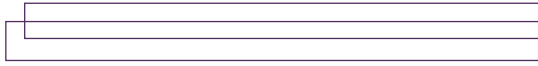This being my first editorial as IASA's editor, I'm a little lost for how to begin. Having spent the last 3 to 4 months coming to grips with the various tasks involved I've been struck by how effortless and seamless our past editor, Ilse Assmann, has made it all seem. She has worked tirelessly over the past 6 years to produce journals, information bulletins, e-Bulletins, and special publications, and to keep the website up to date - with clear processes and methods set up to juggle it all. I'm at once very impressed at all she's achieved, and very apprehensive about how I'm going to follow in her shoes. I can only say I'm excited about doing my best.

The IASA Journal has been handed over to me in excellent shape. It looks great, with a clear branded design that carries through to all IASA publications, and I don't see any reason for changing it at this stage. If there's any development to be done, I believe it may be towards a stand alone, peer reviewed journal that will present more of a mix of new work together with conference presentations. As we've developed the website to accommodate more of the conference proceedings I believe the journal offers us an opportunity to share ideas in greater depth. This may also allow us the opportunity to develop themed issues that would allow wide exploration of concerns from a range of perspectives.

To this end, for this current issue I've tried to gather papers, mainly from the IASA 2008 conference in Sydney, that have a common focus on archival projects working somehow in collaboration with communities.

Some of you may have come across the story of the "Biblioburro", a mobile library run by Luis Soriano and his two donkeys (Alfa and Beto) in the mountain villages of northern Colombia. (If not, read the story in a report in the New York Times at http://www.nytimes. com/2008/10/20/world/americas/20burro.html?_r=2&emc=eta1). Mr Soriano, a primary school teacher from La Gloria, now has some 4800 books, a selection of which he packs onto the backs of Alfa and Beto and heads for the hills. He stops in small village communities to lend to those who are able to read for themselves, and to read to those who are not. Mr Soriano created the Biblioburro out of the simple belief that the act of taking books to people who do not have them can somehow improve this impoverished region, and perhaps Colombia as a whole. The story struck me as I was thinking about a theme for this editorial. It made connections for me with one of the main themes of the 2008 conference in Sydney last September: that of community engagement - the concept that "no archive is an island" and collections only really take on meaning when they can be accessed, appreciated and learnt from - and that the "hard to reach" communities must also form part of our planning.

If there is a theme for this issue of the journal, therefore, then this is it. The papers take a range of stances and approaches to connecting with communities. The opening addresses of Chris Puplick (Australian National Film and Sound Archive) and Jan Lyall (UNESCO Memory of the World programme) draw our attention to the importance of the record of indigenous and original people. Jan uses the example of the phenomenal skill and knowledge bound up in traditional navigational methods as generations of Satawalese navigate between islands in Micronesia – all committed to memory and expressed in songs and other forms of oral tradition. She stresses the "urgent need" to record and ensure the survival of such cultural heritage. One of the important facts she raises is that it's not only outsiders who need this information (and may have access in cyberspace) but the Satawalese themselves, lest the knowledge should die taking with it a major part of Satawalese cultural history and identity. She and all the remaining papers in this issue taken from the conference explore

models for achieving this. International programmes and conventions, software applications, internet browsers and social networking systems, physical repatriation into local or regional repositories, information systems, and local recording projects all assist us in our "social responsibilities" (Richard Moyle) to make collections accessible. To add to the mix we might take a leaf out of Mr Soriano's book and buy a couple of donkeys!

Chris Puplick, while highlighting the importance of the "record of indigenous and original people", also reminds us of the sensitivities attached to working with such cultural heritage. So as we embark on our various dissemination activities we should be mindful of the ethical issues that must underlie all our efforts as "archivists and academics and 'keepers' of the material" (Rob Perks).

The final two articles in the journal were not presented at the Sydney conference. They do remind us though that if we are to have any sound documents to disseminate, we must have the equipment and technical know-how to record them and to preserve them. Christian Liebl's paper on the Telegraphone takes us back to 12 October 1901, the day on which the voice of Emperor Franz Joseph 1 of Austria was recorded on arguably the first magnetic recording ever to have been made. By contrast, Nigel Bewley's report on the Sound Archive Project brings us clearly into the 21st Century describing how the Surface Scanning of Archived Sound Recordings project has managed to successfully transfer a 130 year-old Edison tinfoil phonograph.

Finally, Albrecht Häfner's review of Engel, Kuper and Bell's book (Zeitschichten: Magnetbandtechnik als Kulturträger. Erfinder-Biographien und Erfindungen) is a helpful synopsis in English of the "historical development of magnetic storage technology and magnetic tape in particular".

I do hope you'll all find these papers thought-provoking and of interest.

[Technical note: a few of the images presented are web screenshots and high resolution versions for print publication were not available.]