Seven years ago, a few people worked with Nigel Wright to send up a trial balloon. No one could foresee how this first attempt to publish a journal for the International Oak Society would be received, and you may be able to sense the enthusiastic but tentative feelings underlying Mr. Wright's original introduction (see page 9).

But the project was well conceived, with five invited introductory papers relating to conservation of oaks of western North America; horticultural properties of American oaks; one of the most prestigious of European oak collections, in Holland; native oaks in Europe, as represented by the enchanting nation of Romania; and a description of the type species of the genus (*Quercus robur*), from the perspective of someone living in its natural range in France. That first issue also contained seed exchange offers from France (Stephane Brame), Belgium (Daniel Dumont), Australia (Len Stubbs), and the USA (Dave Kenderes).

While one of the articles was a reprint from another publication, the other four were provided by original associates of what has grown into an organization now comprising membership of more than 500 individuals, from approximately 30 nations on six continents. This growth has not come easily, but it has become a force which is placing the International Oak Society among the elite plant organizations of the world.

That trial journal issue, produced on a photocopying machine in
Mr. Wright's spare time, has been out of print for several years. Many of our members have asked us to reprint it, so that they might have a complete set (all other back issues remain available for purchase), and to correct the original errors and reformat it into the size and style currently used for International Oaks. But the reprinting was delayed due to the costs involved, and due to other excessive demands upon the time of our volunteer board of directors. The organization had been in a period of significant transitional growth, which consumed the attention and energy of its leaders.

That transition finally reached the point where once again it became possible to pursue this project. The opportunity was enhanced when Diana Gardener, a member from Oregon, surprised everyone at the business meeting during our Second Triennial Conference by offering a very substantial grant from her personal funds, thus enabling us to prepare this unscheduled special issue without compromising our budget.

We saw this not only as an opportunity, but an obligation, to produce more than a mere reprint. Within these pages you will find annotations about each author, some new illustrations, and a special history of the formation of the International Oak Society written by our founder, Steven Roesch. Many corrections have been made to the nomenclature and typographical errors included in the original issue (although any publication of this type is likely to have some errors, despite our best efforts). We now are using a quality printing process, and we have made every attempt to produce a commemorative publication suitable for your permanent library.

Our Editorial Chairperson, Doug McCreary, has been assembling our next newsletter and coordinating the completion of our conference proceedings, working from California and England. So I am serving as editor pro tem for this special issue. Everything has been totally re-done—every paper retyped and corrected, line by line. Doing this painstaking work has brought back many wonderful memories for me of the early days of the International Oak Society.

We hope you will treasure this publication, and the history which conceived it. And we hope you will join the members of your board of directors in extending our deepest gratitude to Diana Gardener for helping our organization document its roots.

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