# PREFACE

The importance of data management technology as a branch of computing has come clearly to be recognised over the past two decades. The area is central to the effective exploitation of computer systems over a wide area of application.

VLDB is the major international database conference and has taken place annually since 1975. Originally held in that year in Framingham, Massachuetts as an ad hoc conference to discuss the specific topic of the problems associated with databases which were very large and, in the days when the now seeming archaic *data base* was in common use rather than the now more customary *database*, it soon acquired the initials VLDB and its characteristic logos. These initials now, like IBM, mean more than that for which they stand. Concerned with research and new developments in the database area generally, and moving between the Americas, the Far East and Europe on a three year cycle, the *very large* is perhaps now more applicable to *database conference*.

This volume of 53 papers for the 13th VLDB is the result of a selection by a rigorous refereeing process from almost 300 papers submitted. The Programme Committee co-chairmen William Kent and Peter Stocker are to be congratulated on this outcome of their work. Thanks go not only to them but also to the members of their Committee, other referees, and not least to Giampio Bracchi who co-ordinated the final selection and Peter Hammersley for his skill and work in the actual publication process.

In addition to those directly concerned with the Proceedings thanks must go to all those without whom the Brighton VLDB would not have taken place; particularly to the VLDB Trustees and their Chairman, Alfonso Cardenas for ensuring the continuity of the series, to Keith Jeffery and the Organising Committee for making this 13th VLDB actually happen, to the Sponsors and Supporters, and to all those who submitted papers whether accepted or not; and to those who actually came.

Peter King
General Conference Chairman