

Editorial

After six years in office as the editor of the *Journal of Micropalaeontology*, my time in post has come to an end, and as this will be my final issue of the Journal it is time to hand over the reins. At the AGM of TMS a new editor was elected; Professor Alan Lord and I know that he will do a great job.

As has been reported over the last year or so at the AGM and in TMS Newsletter, there will be some significant changes afoot for the Journal which I have been involved with over the last couple of years. This negotiation has resulted in a new publishing contract for the *Journal of Micropalaeontology* with the Geological Society of London (GSL), and its publisher the Geological Society Publishing House (GSPH). This will relieve our Society of the financial burden of paying for the production of the Journal. We will exercise the same editorial control we have always had, and although the GSPH is run as a commercial concern by the Geological Society they, as a learned society themselves, place great emphasis on not interfering with the running of society Journals, and respect the academic nature of our science. The format of the Journal will remain the same, with continued emphasis on excellent international science and high-quality plate production.

There will, however, be some significant changes regarding the way papers are submitted and dealt with. The main one will be the initiation of online submission and manuscript handling for all papers. The Editor-elect (Professor Alan Lord), GSPH Production Editor (Sarah Gibbs) and I have been setting this up over the last six months or so under the AllenTrack system. We will continue trialling the process with a view to having this ready to roll out early-mid next year (2010). The introduction of electronic submission and reviewing is being implemented to shorten submission of manuscript to publication times, and to improve communication with the authors. As soon as we have ironed out all the wrinkles, a set of new author instructions will be carried in the Newsletter, the Journal and online at www.tmsoc.org.uk. I know that there may be some resistance to online submission (we may still accept paper copy from authors without access to the internet), but it will greatly improve the efficiency of the whole procedure, speeding up reviewing and the total time taken to publication. Most importantly authors will be able to see at a glance online where their paper is in the whole process. The final improvement of this online process is that it will greatly lessen the work load for the new editor, something I greatly empathise with after the last six years.

Another feature of the new contract is that the Journal will have a significant web presence as part of the Geological Society's Lyell Collection (www.lyellcollection.org) from the latter part of 2010. This will see an increase in a *Journal of Micropalaeontology's* exposure, and hopefully a rise in our impact factor. Members of the Society will still be able to download pdfs of papers from this site free as part of their membership benefits as happens at the moment on the Society website. Again, this move will reduce the time and effort various committee members will have to spend maintaining the Journal online. I thank Andy Henderson as webmaster for his sterling efforts over the last several years implementing and running this,

and thanks also to the Natural History Museum in London for hosting this on behalf of the Society.

Finally, with an eye on impact factors, and also to try and reduce submission to publication time, should the new Editor and TMS committee see a need they will have the ability to increase the number of issues per year from two to initially three, and then ultimately four issues per year, at no additional cost to the Society. This would increase the number of papers we can publish and reduce the lead time which has been naturally restricted by fact that we presently only publish two issues a year. All of these should hopefully increase the appeal of the Journal for potential authors, and recognise my, and the committee's, ambition to increase the international impact of the Journal.

One of the major consequences of implementing all of these new features is that it will no longer be possible to run the Journal in the same way with the Editor assuming much of the day-to-day handling of papers once submitted. I have certainly found it increasingly difficult to juggle all my responsibilities with being editor and in future, with everyone's time becoming more accountable, it might be difficult to tempt potential new editors to take up the post. With this in mind, and in order to make the new editor's job a bit more manageable, we will also establish and elect a new editorial board. At present there is an International Editorial Board, however their remit was not related to editorial duties for the Journal, but was to try and increase the exposure of the Journal in their respective geographical regions. (I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of this board for their help over the last couple of years.) The new editorial board will be set up by the incoming Chief Editor, and the members will be Associate Editors, and therefore will have much more direct impact on the running of the Journal. The new Chief Editor will delegate responsibility to each Associate Editor to look after papers in their speciality, to seek reviews and to make recommendations to the Chief Editor whether those papers should be published or not.

At this point of my editorial, I would also like to record some personal observations. Peer review of papers is extremely important to our Journal, but I have also reviewed and edited in detail every single paper that has been submitted, whether it has been accepted or not. I realise that this is not always seen as a necessary role for an editor to take, but I feel that authors deserve reasons for my decisions. We receive a mixture of excellent, good, mediocre and substandard submissions (although increasingly less of the latter). Part of my responsibility is to try perform an impartial editorial review of each manuscript, to insure correct peer review, and to present our members with interesting and original material. The Journal attracts submissions from both the academic and industrial arenas, therefore I have tried to include manuscripts not only for their originality and scientific quality, but also for their relevance to our members and the wider readership. During my time as editor, I have gradually applied increasingly stricter criteria for acceptance of manuscripts, which is reflected in the increase of our rejection rate since 2003. At present, 20–30% of

the papers submitted to the Journal will be rejected; however, I always try to offer authors the possibility of re-submission after major revision if their papers are of sufficient interest and merit.

I have heard many times over my editorship that the Journal seems to be heavily biased towards ostracod papers, but the statistics over the last six and a half years do not support this. Of the papers accepted, the following statistics apply: Foraminifera (33%), Ostracods (29%), Palynology based (13.7%), Radiolaria & Diatoms (6%), Nannofossils (4.6%), Conodonts/Micro-

vertebrates (2.75%), Miscellaneous (including Notebooks, obituaries, honours & techniques) (10.95%).

My last act as Editor is to publicly record my sincere thanks to the production staff at the Geological Society Publishing House, particularly Sarah Gibbs, and to the 150 or so different reviewers who have agreed to spend time editing and refereeing manuscripts for me over the last six years.

I wish the next Chief Editor all the best in his new role.

F. John Gregory