

EDITORIAL

The first editor of the Journal, Lesley Sheppard, retired at the end of the Annual General Meeting of the Society in November 1987 when her term of office came to an end. She is still on the editorial board and has retained responsibility for the design of the covers of the Journal (so, please, no comments about the choice of colours to the editor!), and also saw Volume 7 part 1 through to completion. This is an obvious moment to look back on the progress of the journal since volume 1 was published in 1982. Lesley's stewardship has, I believe, seen the reputation of the Journal grow and its establishment as one of the major international periodicals in the field of micropalaeontology. In its early years may queried the need for yet another journal; the backlog of papers awaiting publication is a clear answer to that question. The publication of two parts per year has enabled the average time between submission and publication to remain at about 11 months; the financial support of our sponsors (listed on the inside front cover) has been important in enabling us to publish some 240 pages each year. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Lesley, and also the good offices of International Stratigraphic Services, for her effort on our behalf over the last seven years, and can only hope that the next seven are as equally productive. John Whittaker and members of the Editorial board have provided continuity and advice during the change over to a new editorship.

Another group of people who deserve thanks are our referees. This can be a difficult task, but the standard of the Journal depends upon them absolutely. The policy of the Journal is to retain the anonymity of referees, although referees sometimes wish to make themselves known to the authors, but this is considered to be a private matter between the two parties. If there is a recommendation for rejection of a manuscript, the manuscript is always sent to at least one other referee for a second opinion. There has been considerable debate during the last year or so in *Nature* and *Science* regarding the anonymity of referees, and some journals now publish the names of the referees of a paper. Our policy is to protect the referee, which we believe enables them to give an honest opinion, while the careful seeking of a second opinion guards against prejudice. The final decision, of course, remains with the Editor and the Editorial Board; the whole of the latter has been consulted in rare cases.

Readers may have noticed a few changes which have been introduced in the Journal. Commencing with Volume 7, page numbers will run for the whole volume instead of each part being numbered individually; and with Volume 8 the contents list appears on the outside back cover instead of inside the Journal. Otherwise the Journal has not changed, and Volume 8 part 1 covers as broad a spectrum of the subject as usual.

M. C. Keen, Editor