

Editorial

After seven years' service as Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Micropalaeontology* I am pleased to pass on the honour to Dr Sev Kender and his Editorial Board and to wish them every success. My predecessor, John Gregory, shouldered the editorial burden alone whereas I have been supported by an Editorial Board, and it is a pleasure to record my warm thanks to its membership over the years: Dr Sigal Abramovich, Dr Laia Alegret, Dr Elisabeth Brouwers, Dr Taniel Danelian, Dr John Gregory, Professor Michael Kucera, Professor John Marshall, Professor Emanuela Mattioli, Dr Giles Miller, Dr Martin Pearce, Dr Francesca Sangiorgi, Dr Catherine Stickley, Professor Bridget Wade and Dr Jeremy Young. I have relied on these Handling Editors for their specialist skills, experience, common sense and good judgement. Editorial work can be demanding, even if little respected by funding bodies. How much time should one reasonably spend on a manuscript that clearly contains good science but is poorly presented because the author lacks advice and direction? How much time should an Editor spend correcting language for authors with English as a second language? My test of language is to think 'it may not be Oxford English but is it clear and unambiguous in its meaning?' A guiding principle for me is summed up in the statement of the late Roger Kaesler of the University of Kansas Press: 'It is our task as Editors to find meaning where none was intended'. You may smile at the apparent cynicism of this statement but underlying it is the real significance of editorial work as a contribution to original research and its promotion. Both Editor and Reviewer can contribute in this way, to advising, recommending or persuading authors that their science can be developed, perhaps made more fundamental in its impact on their discipline. At this point it is also a pleasure to record my thanks to numerous Reviewers who have given their time and expertise, in almost all cases responding positively and quickly to requests for their advice, in the understanding that reviewing manuscripts is part of the quid pro quo of publishing one's own papers.

My predecessor analysed the copy he had published (Gregory 2009) in part to refute a perceived bias towards ostracod papers. I have carried out the same exercise for volumes 29–35 using the same categories with the following result (2009 figures in parentheses: Foraminifera 19.1% (33%), Ostracods 15.8% (29%), Palynology (including charophytes) 10% (13.7%), Silicofossils 20% (6%), Calcareous Nannofossils 6.6% (4.6%), Conodonts/Micro-vertebrates 1.6% (2.75%), Miscellaneous 26.6% (10.95%). The Miscellaneous category includes multigroup research papers, techniques, Notebook items, honours and obituaries. I have cheated by not including the contents of volume 36 where part 1 (this part) is a thematic set of 14 research papers on ostracods; however, part 2 is

essentially full and contains only one ostracod paper. As an ostracod worker I hope that I am not seen to have favoured my own group; indeed, I am most proud of the number of silicofossil papers published, some of which I inherited from John Gregory. Ultimately we can publish only what is submitted!

A number of trends are apparent: (1) number of submissions has increased, with 2015 a record at 45, while number of papers published has remained at an average of 15 in part because *JM* now publishes longer papers; (2) publication time is falling thanks to OnlineFirst but also to the work of Editors and Reviewers; (3) full-text downloads via the Lyell Collection of the Geological Society and GeoScienceWorld are increasing year-on-year; and (4) Impact Factor now stands at 1.25 and 5-Year Impact Factor at 1.108. One word about the ThomsonReuters Impact Factor: this applies to a journal as a whole, whereas it is clear that there is a trend to more personal bibliometrics for the assessment of individual scientists' 'impact' in their own discipline for purposes of appointment, promotion and award of research funding.

My old friend (and fellow ostracod worker) Koen Martens recently remarked (Martens 2016) that 'Life is evolution and with evolution comes change' as he looked back at the first fifteen years of the twenty-first century from an editorial perspective. How right he is, especially in the world of scientific publishing. That world is increasingly kaleidoscopic with an ever-growing range of 'services' to the reader (=user, potential customer) and author (also a potential customer) which are electronically and web interlinked, and the trend will continue. Having said that, there are nevertheless basic principles of scientific honesty and professional integrity in the preparation, communication and use of scientific information, a process in which Editors, Reviewers and Publishers are key elements.

In conclusion it is a pleasure to offer my great thanks to the Geological Society Publishing House and its staff, especially Jo Armstrong, Angharad Hills and Neal Marriott, but my deepest thanks go to Sarah Gibbs, our Senior Production Editor, who has been an unfailing tower of strength even when faced with the most irritating and trivial detail.

Alan Lord
6 December 2016

References

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