

THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Editorial

During the summer of 1978, the Council of the Geological Society decided that, as from 1 January 1979, the publishers of the *Journal* should be Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd., Oxford. Reaching this decision meant innumerable agonising meetings at various levels, and considerable anxiety for the Editors. Owing to this upheaval, it is likely that the first parts for 1979 will be slightly behind schedule. Considerable effort will be devoted to ensuring that future Parts are produced on time.

In view of the change of publishers, a special word of thanks is due to Scottish Academic Press, and in particular to its Managing Director, Mr. Douglas Grant, for quite exceptional service to the Society during the past decade. SAP virtually bailed the Society out of trouble when the *Journal* was in financial difficulties, and Parts were seriously behind schedule. My predecessors, Professor W. W. Bishop and later Professor Bernard Leake, working forcefully in close association with SAP, eliminated the backlog and ensured the regular appearance of the *Journal*. Dr. W. D. I. Rolfe and Dr. A. L. Harris maintained this record with considerable energy and drive. Mr. Grant has been a great 'friend' of the Society, and a staunch supporter of geology in many other ways. Despite being 'the man at the top' in his firm, he was always instantly approachable, and ready to give sound financial and technical advice. His judgment, expertise and personal interest have been highly valued by everyone in the Society.

Dr. A. L. Harris retired as Chief Editor, and Professor M. Brooks and Dr. N. J. Soper as Editors during 1978. The Society is really indebted to them for their services, involving not only enormous devotion but well-organised application to heavy work loads. Dr. C. J. Talbot and Dr. R. J. Bailey have taken over as new Editors.

Largely due to Professor Leake's efforts as Chairman of the Publications Committee over the last few years, the *Journal* (and indeed other Society publications) will show an impressive surplus in 1978. Its general financial position is sound, and will be augmented by the potential of the new publishers in terms of overseas sales. A modest growth of the *Journal* is therefore planned for 1979. The *Journal* still attracts more scientifically acceptable papers than it is able to publish.

It is appropriate to reiterate occasionally the aims of the *Journal*, which are to publish in a prompt manner diverse papers on major topics of international interest in any of the earth sciences. Those of local interest are

unsuitable; short topical papers reporting new developments will be published quickly. The *Journal* is intended to be broad in scope in terms of the range of earth science subjects covered. Professor W. W. Bishop put it succinctly in previous Editorials when he said that 'the future success of the *Journal* must be in the variety and quality of papers published'; 'each Part of the *Journal* should have something of interest for everyone'; 'topical contributions should allow Fellows to browse in subjects within earth sciences but outside their own specialisations'. Papers describing advances in specialised areas of geology are welcomed if they are written so that their significance is apparent to a wide readership. Overseas contributions are invited; papers do not have to be read before the Society; nor must authors be Fellows of the Society.

The new format of the *Journal* (commencing with Vol. 135, Part 1) has in general been successful, and saved the Society a significant amount of money, but not without headaches for the Editors, who have had to pass items against their professional judgment solely in the interests of getting Parts out on time, or to avoid heavy bills falling on the Society. Authors are requested to consider the format of the *Journal* more closely when designing text-figures and tables.

Thematic meetings on an impressive array of topics have been an extremely successful aspect of Society activities in recent years, generating interesting thematic sets of papers in the *Journal*. However, an editorial aspect which must be stressed, unless thematic sets are to be broken apart, is that 'the speed of the convoy is that of the slowest ship'; one overdue paper can hold up all the rest, and produce great difficulties for the Editors in making up Parts. At one thematic meeting in 1977, all the papers were in hand on the day of the meeting; no less than 28 referees made a special effort to report expeditiously. Authors, convenors, referees and editors of thematic papers should try to emulate this example in the interests of prompt publication.

Lastly, authors are requested to conform to the recommendations in the 'Guide to Stratigraphical Procedure' by C. H. Holland *et al.* (Special Report No. 11, *Geol. Soc. Lond.* 1978). Numerous papers receive adverse referees' reports concerning stratigraphic aspects of a most simple kind, and conformation to procedures laid down in the *Guide* would forestall such criticisms.

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Chairman, Editorial board