

## **Preface**

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At least since Roman times, the number 50 has been a landmark in our personal lives, in the passage of time, and in the progress in material matters. It is a convenient point at which to pause for a moment to review past achievements and reflect on what the future may hold.

Looking back briefly on the early days of this Journal, there was a clear idea of its purpose and the area it would cover, but the market dictates! In the course of its life of 18 years, new applications and requirements have arisen which need to be met. As a result, some old systems have declined in importance whilst others have expanded and new concepts have been developed. These changes have been reflected in the contents of the Journal.

In this 51st volume, the present status of some of the older systems and awareness in some of the more recent ones are reviewed and possible fields of application suggested. I believe these papers to be interesting and informative to a wide range of readers and are likely to give rise to questions and ideas that may lead to further advances.

D.H. Collins  
*Bedar*  
*Almeria*  
*Spain*