



RETIRING EDITORIAL

As I approach retirement as Chief Editor of the *Journal of Structural Geology*, the time has come to write my farewell editorial. How can I express, in words, 12½ years as Chief Editor, and 17 years altogether as a JSG editor? Since making the announcement, I have been overwhelmed with messages of good wishes, interspersed with questions such as “what will you do next?”. I can hardly remember a time when I was not editing JSG papers, and so perhaps it is worth writing a few words about why I *have* been an editor for so long: how it all began; some of the ‘highs’ and ‘lows’; what makes this editor tick; and what I have learnt along the way.

The *Journal of Structural Geology* was conceived by Paul Hancock at Bristol, and Peter Henn at Pergamon Press, in 1978. It was set up with Associate Editor Tony Barber and an Editorial Advisory Board of 20, some of whom remain with us today. I was invited to be a second Associate Editor at the start of 1981, ostensibly to handle the more mathematical papers! I was completing a post-doc at the time, after a family career break, so was flattered to be asked. I really don’t know what possessed Paul to ask such a novice, as I had only the barest of experience of reviewing papers, and none of editing. So the first tribute I want to pay in this last Editorial is to Paul Hancock: for having the courage and vision to start up this Journal; for teaching me how to be an editor, through example and encouragement; and for letting me succeed him as Chief Editor, in 1985.

At the time of transfer from Paul Hancock to me, JSG was publishing six issues a year, and we had four editors. Over the years since, we have expanded to eight, then 10 and then 12 issues a year, and added and subtracted many times to the editorial team of (currently) seven. It has been a privilege, over these years, to work with so many talented associate editors: Peter Hudleston (1983–1997), John Platt (1983–1991), Dave Sanderson (1985–1992), Gautam Mitra (1986–1990), Carol Simpson (1988–1991), Dave Pollard (1990–1993), Richard Lisle (1990–present), Steve Wojtal (1991–1996), Cees Passchier (1991–present), Jim Evans (1992–present), Richard Norris (1993–present); and recently, Joe White (1996) and Don Fisher (1997). I would like to thank all of you for your support, for your individual talents and professionalism which allowed us to develop a coherent ‘team’ editorial policy for JSG, and for your personal friendship. I know I must have tried your patience, sometimes. Readers curious to put faces to all these names can refer to the ‘mugshots’ in 1989 (Vol. 11 No 1) and 1993 (Vol. 15 No. 6).

I should also like to pay tribute to the many members of the Editorial Advisory Board of JSG, who have supported and advised us over the years. Bruce Hobbs,

Ray Price, John Ramsay and Paul Williams, have been with us from the beginning, providing ideas and encouragement throughout. Win Means holds the record for the most reviews done, and has been a wise counsellor for many years. Many of our former associate editors (above) continue to play an active advisory role. However, I have also been keen to encourage new blood on the EAB, so that JSG represents changes in the subject, a younger generation of authors and readers, and geographical expansions. I thank all of you, past and present, for your contributions over the period of my editorship.

This Journal would never have succeeded without a willing publisher. It would be too easy, at this point, for me to look back nostalgically to the halcyon days of Pergamon Press under Robert Maxwell, under the guidance of our Publishing Editor, Peter Henn. We enjoyed seven years with a superb production editor, Val Lepper (1986–1993), and during this time JSG style and production methods remained constant while the Journal itself continued to grow. The last four years under the ownership of Elsevier Science have brought many changes: in production methods, personnel and policy. Some of these have driven me to distraction, at times, but I will not dwell on them. The recent changes in production methods have affected the whole of science publishing, to embrace electronic publishing and lay the foundations for on-line journals. The benefits for JSG have been the virtual elimination of typesetting errors now that text is produced from authors’ disks; and our move from two types of paper to all-glossy paper at the start of this year. Yet as I write, I am not entirely convinced that the technology is always serving us as well as it could, so we are currently monitoring the quality of complex shaded diagrams and of photographs, with dedicated new staff at Elsevier. I wish to express my thanks to all the production staff who have worked with me over the years, and especially to my Senior Publishing Editor, Peter Henn. He has been a source of help and encouragement, through all my time as an editor, and for the life of JSG. At times, I must have been a difficult and demanding editor to deal with, because of my passion for this Journal, and an unwillingness to compromise our style and quality. I also appreciate the way Peter Henn has facilitated my attendance at many conferences over the years, to hold editorial meetings and to bring me into closer contact with ‘the public’.

‘The public’ for JSG are its contributors and readers. We would not be thriving, as we are, without contributions from structural/tectonic geologists from all over the world. I have been asked, over the years, why JSG

publishes so many papers on microstructure, or strain, or shear criteria, or a particular region; or why we do not publish more on certain things. The answer is that JSG publishes a selection of the papers you, 'the public', submit. We cannot publish papers that are not submitted or not written! So it is a myth that this is "my" Journal, reflecting what I personally regard as interesting and important. Over the period of my editorship, the contents of JSG have changed in what appear to be current hot topics or fashions; and we have witnessed the increasing part that industry has played in geoscience research. The only way that I have perhaps influenced these trends, personally, is in the choice of special issues we have published. I will not attempt to analyse the changes in structure and tectonics reflected in the contents of the *Journal of Structural Geology* over my term of editorship, here. Paul Hancock and I have plans to do this together, as an introduction to the proposed special issue, *Questions in Structural Geology* to celebrate our 20th anniversary in 1999 (see Editorial in Vol. 19 No. 8).

I am not certain that I shall reach the end of this Editorial with any sensible comments about "what makes an editor tick", but I think the greatest rewards come from enabling people to improve and eventually publish their work. It helps to like people, and it would be impossible to do the job without a sense of humour. Not, I hasten to add, that anyone's science is a laughing matter; nor, perhaps, should I have fun from inadvertent errors in English or syntax of others. However, I treasure some of the unusual covering letters I have received, over the years, and these have sustained me in the somewhat isolated existence of editing manuscripts and letter-writing to reviewers and authors. And speaking of letter-writing, most of our communication *was* by letter in the early years. Increasingly, this has been replaced by electronic mail, which has speeded up communication and provided more informality that can lead to better understanding. When I count up the 2000+ manuscripts I have dealt with since 1985, it would appear that I have written a huge number of letters or notes running into five figures! I extend my thanks to all of you who have written informatively, sometimes critically, sometimes entertainingly, for providing me with so much contact with the structural/tectonic community around the world. I have learnt a lot about human nature and psychology from this correspondence; but I have also learnt some important lessons in science and structural geology, for which I am grateful.

What have I learnt from editing, that might allow me to say what makes a good paper? This is not an easy question to answer, because we all have different ideas of 'good writing' and the 'ideal' arrangement and style of a paper. Personally, I like clear writing and a clear arrangement; and yet some of the important mould-

breaking papers over the years have come from people who have written rather complex papers. Certainly, editors do not hold the premium for good writing (though this is a matter of opinion!). I think a 'good paper' should persuade a wide audience to read it, and should change the reader in some way. In a research journal such as this, there may be too much emphasis on papers presenting the results of research projects, at the expense of whether the paper might be useful for teaching. This brings me to the question which I think all potential authors need to address: Why am I writing this paper? This question is especially relevant, on occasions when authors prove hostile to the criticisms of reviewers and/or the editor. It is insufficient to answer that the work has been done; or the report must be written to satisfy the supervisor or grant-giver. I suggest that any writer (1) should want to produce the best paper he/she is capable of, (2) should want to persuade readers that the contribution is newsworthy and important, and (3) should want to educate specialist and non-specialist, alike. These ideals have, I think, underlain my attitude to editing, reviewing and revision. They are, of course, common sense—but some of the cleverest scientists are a little short on common sense, sometimes.

I have not been a typical journal editor, doing the work alongside an academic appointment as many do. This has been my main work, part-time, and has allowed me to undertake research as well, and to have a fulfilling family life. JSG has therefore been part of the Treagus family, and it is to my family that I want to pay my last tributes. I could never have been this journal's Chief Editor without the support, encouragement and comfort of my dear husband, Jack. He has been advisor, critic and stop-gap reviewer on countless occasions, has tempered some of my worst excesses, and eventually has encouraged me to hand over to a successor. Our daughters, Helen and Jane, have grown up with JSG, been occasional 'secretaries', and have many times put my scientific life into perspective with their jokes about "The Journal".

My successor, Jim Evans, has been a familiar part of the editorial team for several years, and was acting chief editor for this year's special issue. He will operate under slightly different (but more conventional) editorial arrangements, and with the help of an editorial assistant. I have great confidence that Jim will take JSG forward into a new era, with dedication, energy and innovation. Jim, you have my support in the background, in the coming years, and these final words of advice. Keep your sense of fun and humour if you can. Remember that JSG authors are just people, like us. And don't forget that the Editor's word is final!

Sue Treagus