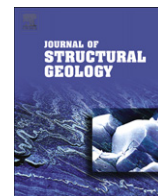




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## Journal of Structural Geology

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## Editorial

## Special Editorial – 30 years of JSG

This year, 2009, marks the 30th anniversary of the *Journal of Structural Geology*, as the Editors of this Journal have written in an earlier Editorial. It is an honour to be asked to write a “Special Editorial” to mark this milestone, especially as it is now more than ten years since I stepped down as a working editor. We marked the two previous decade anniversaries of JSG with special issues: *Current Topics in Structural Geology* (Vol 11, 1–2, 1989); and *Questions in Structural Geology* (Vol 21, 8–9, 1999). This 3rd decade is being celebrated by a series of specially commissioned review papers, spread throughout this year, and perhaps beyond. These, I anticipate, will encompass most of the research themes and topics that have been aired in JSG across its 30 years. This editorial is a more personal backwards look at JSG and its contents over the years.

One of the immediate benefits of electronic production is that JSG can be brought directly to my desktop computer. The ability to scroll relatively easily through the 30 years' contents requires considerably less stamina than physically examining the 286 issues from 1979 to 2008 that are in my bookcase! It is one of the major advances to be celebrated in this 3rd decade of JSG, that we can seek out papers on particular topics, and by particular authors, so easily via Science Direct. This revisiting of JSG's contents has brought back many pleasant memories from my earlier time as Associate and then Chief Editor. It has also reminded me of the concerns I had, when I was no longer in charge, and when for a short time the publisher radically reorganised the editorial system and no longer required a chief editor. It was with delight and relief that this position was reinstated in 2005, and Cees Passchier became – and still is – Editor-in-Chief, after serving on the editorial team of JSG for more than half its life. Cees has played an important part in this third decade, maintaining continuity with a strong international team of editors and assistants, while Elsevier was making changes in style and implementing full electronic submission. All the 3rd decade's Editors are to be congratulated on maintaining JSG's reputation for high quality science and publishing during periods of change.

What seems remarkable to me, after this journey back through 30 years of JSG papers, is how many themes are as important today, as in 1979. Volume 1 features papers on shear zones, folds, fabrics and strain analysis. The first special issue (Vol 2, 3–4) was *Shear Zones in Rocks*, and yet in virtually every volume since then, there have been papers on shear zones from different parts of the world, or in the laboratory, or in theory. The same can be said of folding and strain. The increased availability of personal computing together with computational power, during JSG's life, has meant that we are seeing a greater use of numerical solutions and numerically based theoretical models, e.g. using finite or discrete elements. Analogue modelling has not been replaced, however;

with new materials and ‘see through’ methods, this is still invaluable for simulating real geological structures. Most importantly, perhaps, JSG remains the prime journal for publishing field descriptions of structures from all over the world: and beyond, as witnessed by a special issue on *Planetary Tectonics*. It knows no bounds of scale, and this is also the journal of choice for publishing on microstructures and deformation fabrics on the smallest scale, as seen in many thematic issues and regular papers.

A review of the 33 special issues published in JSG reveals all the important themes, the topics of international conferences over the years, and some personal milestones of key people. The largest ever special issue (15, 3–5), came out of John Ramsay's 60th birthday conference, a fitting tribute to his standing in structural geology and his personal support of JSG. There are other special issues to honour individuals, some with a regional flavour, and many that are thematic, on a wide range of topics. Looking more widely at all the contents of JSG, some of the themes that became popular or hot – e.g. thrust tectonics, transpression, fault populations, basin modelling, porphyroblast fabrics, to name a few – can be linked to the emergence of individuals around the world who have since become key figures in structure and tectonics.

Now fully international, as revealed by the current contents and editorial team, it might be forgotten that JSG initially had strong British roots. Paul Hancock (who sadly died in 1998) founded this journal from Bristol in 1978, with Peter Henn at Pergamon Press, Oxford, and with support from members of the Tectonic Studies Group in Britain at that time. Looking at the twenty chief/associate editors who have worked for JSG over the years, more than half have originated (if not remained) in Britain. Along with the editors in North America, we have enjoyed the huge advantage of working in our first language. I take my hat off to the smaller band of editors, past and present, who are not native English speakers, including our current Editor-in-Chief. It is a hard enough task, without the additional burden of working in a foreign language, and one that has many idiosyncrasies.

Returning to topics in JSG across the three decades, I think that Paul Hancock, had he still been with us, would have been thrilled by the increased dominance of faulting and fracturing on our current contents. Fracture process and neotectonics were his own speciality, and yet Paul more often presided over papers on strain, shear zones and folds. I recall that I was brought in (in 1981) because I was seen as ‘mathsy’, and could help with the increasing numbers of theory based papers. Paul used to bemoan the fact that there were about ten papers on strain theory for every one paper documenting real strain measurements in rocks. The same comment on theory versus nature might be made today, and not just for strain.

Looking at all the topics and research areas that have featured in JSG over its 30 year life, rather than seeing the emergence and dying out of topics, I see the ebb and flow of a huge range of subjects, scales and approaches within the broad remit of structural geology and tectonics. Any random issue of JSG might yield a paper on structure and deformation of rocks: on ductile, plastic or brittle processes; in nature, theory or experiment; in plate tectonics, orogenesis, crustal extension, or exhumation; on igneous and vein intrusion, or linkage of fractures; from smallest scale microstructures and porphyroblasts, to nappes, basins and plates. These eclectic contents of JSG are a testimony to all the geoscientists who have contributed their ideas and research findings to JSG, over the last 30 years. Their work lives on, not just in print or electronic format, but in shaping teaching and research in

structural geology in the years ahead, promising a healthy and exciting future for the *Journal of Structural Geology* for many more decades.

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