

Editorial

The opening item in this issue represents a new form of contribution for the Journal; it may be helpful therefore to say something by way of introduction.

One feature of the Second Conference of the European Ceramic Society held in Augsburg, Germany, in September 1991, was the holding of a series of workshops at which contentious or difficult questions in the development of ceramics were addressed. The objective was to take advantage of the presence of the many participants at the meeting and to seek for a consensus in respect to identifying the best solutions for long-standing problems in ceramics science and engineering. Those who attended the workshops will have appreciated the spirited debate that took place and the sharper definition of the problems that emerged from the discussion.

A number of benefits can be identified in extending this type of interaction to the printed page. There is first the fact that the discussions can find more permanent form and that they are then open to the widest audience; there is also the fact that the more measured pace of a publication in contrast to a conference debate ensures that the issues can be presented in a more focused and consistent form. This, then, is the task of the new type of article in the Journal. On each occasion, it will allow a colleague in the ceramics community to present a viewpoint on a matter of wide concern; the viewpoint can be set forward in firm and even vigorous terms, the objective being to provoke a response and in this way to allow the emergence of a consensus at least in respect to the issues of debate if not in respect to the preferred conclusions. Following the appearance of the initial statement, it is intended that readers express their opinion, a summary of the responses then appearing in a later issue.

For the opening topic we are fortunate to have a contribution from Professor de With, who has drawn upon his wide experience in both the teaching of ceramics and in the industrial practice of ceramics in drawing up a recommended path to improvements in reliability. We are confident that members will find the contribution to be a stimulating and thought-provoking presentation of this important theme; may we, at the same time, encourage readers who wish to confirm or contest the viewpoint that has been advanced to summarise their opinions so that some of the wider community's thinking can be given in future pages of the Journal.

Richard Brook
Editor