
Editorial

This is the last occasion upon which I shall be able to address the readers of *Dalton Transactions* and I should like to take the opportunity to review the state of our journal. It gives me considerable pleasure to note that *Dalton* has achieved increasing prominence in the chemistry community, as indicated by the impact factors, and to claim that we are without doubt the principal European journal of inorganic chemistry. We are now seeking to expand our constituency within North America.

For that reason, I am particularly pleased to welcome Professor Greg Girolami as our new North American Associate Editor. Greg is one of the most prominent of the new generation of US inorganic chemists, but both he and his wife Vera have extensive acquaintance with Europe, and particularly with the UK. They spent a fruitful post-doctoral period at Imperial College, working with Geoffrey Wilkinson.

Greg's task is to represent *Dalton* in North America (the United States, Mexico and Canada) and encourage the submission of high-quality work from there by acting as a link between contributors and the Cambridge office, by publicising the advantages of *Dalton* as a vehicle for the dissemination of results, and by representing *Dalton* at meetings and conferences. This is a considerable undertaking, and the Dalton Editorial Board offers him every encouragement and assistance, and wishes him every success.



Professor G. S. Girolami

Considerable changes have occurred to *Dalton Transactions* in the last few years. We went through a difficult period some time ago, which coincided with the move of the operation from London to Cambridge. The delays which affected us then have been overcome, in considerable part due to the efforts of our predecessors on the Dalton Editorial Board and in the Editorial Office. During my term, we have been free to explore ways to consolidate the position of *Dalton Transactions* as the principal European journal of inorganic chemistry, and to broaden its appeal in terms of content and constituency.

It is probably still true that we reflect to a large degree the state of inorganic chemistry in the UK. Our aim has been more to try to reflect European inorganic chemistry. There are

still gaps in our coverage. For example, we are still rather lightweight in the fields of solid-state chemistry, organometallic chemistry and bioinorganic chemistry. There are specific initiatives in hand to try to remedy some of these deficiencies. For example, we are discussing a joint project with the Materials Forum, but there is little yet to report. We have to proceed with care to avoid damage to the interests of colleagues in other parts of the RSC constellation.

We have also opened the Dalton Editorial Board to representatives from Continental Europe. This has been useful to us for several reasons, not least because we can obtain a better idea of how we are viewed in neighbouring countries. This is important for our aim of establishing a European identity, but is also relevant to the projected developments in German chemical publishing. These include a revamped inorganic journal, as well as a new venture to be named '*Chemistry—A European Journal*'.

These publications may have some impact on RSC journals, but not in any immediate and dramatic way. One could have wished that such initiatives reflected a truly European development, but politics seem to have intervened. Europe is too small, and the competition is too strong, to allow us the luxury of fighting among ourselves for a limited market and a limited amount of first-class chemistry.

That being said, we do need to improve *Dalton Transactions* further, to defend our current position and to capitalise upon it. The steps we have taken will take time to produce results, but already they are beginning to show effects. Colleagues often comment on the need to raise the standard of the papers published in the journal, and have suggested that we raise the rejection rate, currently at about 32%. The Dalton Editorial Board will be considering this but whether it would produce a higher standard is open to question. What would undoubtedly raise the standard of papers would be a general acceptance that the best work produced in British laboratories would automatically appear in British journals, and not elsewhere. In fact, the most eminent British inorganic chemists do already publish predominantly in *Dalton Transactions*, and they seem to have thrived on it. Publishing in *Dalton Transactions* will eventually force competitors to read it regularly, and increase the impact factor, which clearly has considerable significance, whatever one's reservations about such measures of popularity may be.

The developments of the past few years include the achievement of very short average publication times, a large increase in the annual total of papers received and published, 24 issues per year rather than 12, the introduction of Dalton Communications and the publication of feature articles in the form of Dalton Perspectives. This last is a particular personal interest, and I would be glad to receive more feedback from colleagues on how much (or how little) they value them. Even more, the Dalton Editorial Board would be delighted to receive offers from people willing to write Perspectives. Mainly as a result of the sterling work of John Evans, a series of Dalton Discussions meetings will be soon instituted, and the original research papers stemming from them will appear in special issues of *Dalton Transactions*. The demand for colour in the journal is increasing and we shall shortly be able to meet this where appropriate. All these developments are making the journal more attractive without adopting some of the baroque techniques now being used by some of the competition.

We are receiving more papers than ever from outside the UK, and 1994 will certainly produce the greatest number of manuscripts ever presented to *Dalton Transactions* in a single

year. In 1993, the impact factor for *Dalton* increased while those of most of its direct competitors fell. Why this might be is an open question, but I prefer to view it as a confirmation that our editorial policy is, by and large, satisfactory, and would hope that my successor will feel able to build on these foundations rather than to start afresh.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support that I have received from the members of the Dalton Editorial Board during my term as Chairman. The work of the Board is not often recognised publicly, but should be so more often. Finally,

but not least, I wish to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by Janet Dean and the editorial staff. We are indeed lucky to have such a professional and accomplished group producing our journal, and I am confident that in their hands, and under the guidance of my successor, Guy Orpen, the future of *Dalton Transactions* is assured.

Professor G. J. Leigh
Chairman, Dalton Editorial Board