

Editorial

The *Journal of Micropalaeontology* is now well-established as an international publication covering all aspects of microfossils and their applications both in applied studies and in basic research. This has been brought about through the unstinting efforts of the two previous editors, Lesley Sheppard (1982–87) and Mike Keen (1988–94), and their supporting Editorial Boards. Last autumn, the officers of the Society decided that with the appointment of a new editor, the journal should be published through the Geological Society Publishing House.

Since becoming Editor in March, my first task has been to implement the arrangements with the Geological Society. The advantages to the BMS are several. First, there is now a clear separation of duties between the Editorial Board, who will handle all aspects of scientific content and quality control of manuscripts accepted for publication, and the Publishing House, who will be responsible for the entire process of publication and distribution. Second, we gain from professional advice over format and layout. Third, the competitive pricing includes advertising in Geological Society publication lists and reciprocal arrangements with other major geological societies throughout the world. The first obvious manifestation of these changes is in the newly designed cover which now includes a list of keywords, the ISSN number and a bar code to conform with modern publishing practice.

Another major change of policy concerns the role of the Editorial Board. Previously, each Specialist Group nominated an editor who then handled manuscripts appropriate to his or her speciality. As the number of Groups has increased, so have the number of editors, but this clearly cannot continue indefinitely. From now on, there will be 3 or 4 editors and each will handle papers on any aspect of micropalaeontology. In this way, work loads will be equalized and the smaller team should function very effectively. As in the past, specialist advice and comment will come from peer referees.

The scope of the journal has always been broad, especially

to show the application of microfossils to solving geological problems, but with an emphasis on taxonomy. The new cover defines the principal fields of interest: biostratigraphy, evolution, palaeobiology, palaeoenvironments, reviews, taxonomic studies. In future, the emphasis will be on applications, although papers already accepted and under review are likely to continue the taxonomic bias in the current volume. We wish to attract high quality papers that are likely to prove influential in the development of our science.

Initially, the journal appeared as one part per year (although there were two parts to each volume). With effect from volume 3, there were two parts per year. This will continue for volume 13, but the Society is considering the possibility of moving to four parts per year although the number of printed pages would remain much the same. The advantages to members would be a reduction in publication time.

Since a major part of the Society's expenditure is on the production of the journal, the Committee agreed at its meeting held on 22 April that henceforth authors will be invited to defray all or part of the costs of publication of their paper. This will not be obligatory and non-payment will not influence the decision on acceptance or otherwise of a paper. However, those whose research is funded by research grants may have funds to pay page charges and the Society should benefit from this. It will clearly be of advantage to all members if the costs of production of the journal are minimized.

The aim of the Editorial Board is to produce a high quality scientific journal which serves the needs of BMS members. If you have views on any of the changes described above or wish to suggest other ways of improving the journal, please write to me so that the Editorial Board may consider them.

John Murray
Southampton, April 1994