

Editorial note

There are many reasons why someone can be persuaded to become editor of a journal such as *BJHS*. Not least among them for this new editor is the challenge of emulating the high standards set by a succession of editors, and in particular those of his immediate predecessor. Janet Browne has, as all *BJHS* readers know, worked long and hard since 1994 to maintain and enhance the quality of the journal. It is therefore my very real pleasure to pay tribute to all her efforts on behalf of the Society and to add my own personal thanks for the numerous ways in which she has made possible a seamless transition to the new regime. It will also be apparent that her sure touch will be discernible upon many of the articles forthcoming in 2000.

Of equal importance in persuading and motivating a new editor is the prospect of serving the field of history of science, technology and medicine by promoting the work of future scholars. I am therefore especially delighted to be able to introduce this volume with the winning essay in the Society's Singer Prize (1998). Over the years the Prize has more than fulfilled its original promise of providing young scholars with a means of early recognition which has, in several instances, smoothed the often turbulent track towards an academic career. The quality of Greg Radick's paper is guarantee enough that the future of our discipline is secure into the new millennium. It is also with pleasure that we announce details of the Singer Prize for the year 2000.

Inheriting a journal in a conspicuously healthy state is of course a cause for particular celebration. Yet with only four issues a year (one of which tends to be a special issue with guest editors), I am very conscious of the constraints placed on *BJHS* space, and of the consequent queuing of articles for twelve months and more. Seeking nevertheless to encourage early submission of articles from both established and young scholars, I aim to promote the production of shorter, concisely written papers with an upper limit in the range of five to eight thousand words (including footnotes). In the medium term, therefore, I would hope to see articles of this length appearing in print more rapidly than those of greater length.

While also recognizing the truism that the Society is a 'Broad Church' in matters historical, I will continue to favour articles which treat the history of the sciences (including technology and medicine) in socio-cultural contexts. Indeed, empirically grounded, theoretically informed historical studies have in recent years given our discipline a distinctive historiographical edge over many other branches of general history. At the same time, many of us (especially in this country and in North America) have strong institutional ties with wider historical communities. I would therefore like to see prospective contributors, perhaps more used to speaking with colleagues *inside* the field, thinking carefully about the ways in which these wider constituencies can be addressed. Similar, if not greater, challenges arise with the broad scientific communities and their popularizers.

If these wider communities too often appear to ignore the findings and insights of our discipline, the fault may lie less with the scientists than with ourselves. Our discipline has been built upon solid and original scholarship, but we must be sure that our claims are in a form which can be translated well beyond our inner circles.

I am pleased to announce the new editorial board. Stephen Pumfrey has agreed to continue for the moment as book reviews editor. I would also like to welcome back several faces from the distinguished 'old' board: John Brooke, Robert Bud, Ludmilla Jordanova and John Henry. I am especially glad that Janet Browne, with her invaluable fund of recent editorial experience, has agreed to serve. As newcomers, it is a great delight to announce the appointment of John Gascoigne, John Krige, Steven Shapin, Mary Jo Nye and Frank James. Not least in these early and challenging stages of my editorship, I am also very pleased to welcome Michael Griffiths as editorial assistant. His efforts, combined with the Cambridge team, have ensured that copy for the year 2000 has been progressing with remarkable efficiency through the system of production.