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EDITORIAL

Although as scientists we strive as always for objectivity, successive generations have found different aspects of their work inspirational (the less idealistic might say 'fashionable'). Hence, in applied entomology, we have seen interest in biological control wax and wane at least twice, periods when everyone wanted to publish work on the efficacy of new insecticides and a more recent period when integrated pest management was accepted as the only sensible strategy. Papers published in the *Bulletin of Entomological* research have reflected these changes and indeed if it had not done so the journal would have become marginalised. Today there is, quite rightly, an enormous and growing interest in molecular biology and genetics. However, if we simply follow current trends there is likely to be a lag time that will always consign us to a second division. To be at the cutting edge of developments we also have to encourage papers in emerging areas of interest.

As I take on the role of Editor in Chief from Mark Tatchell I would like to thank him for setting the journal on this new road. He and I are agreed about future directions and I see it as my major duty as Editor to try to improve the standing of the journal, to improve its relevance to modern research and hence to improve its rating by standard measures such as journal rankings and impact factors. I would like to see the *Bulletin* become a leading journal in the field of insect molecular ecology, clearly an area that is likely to expand rapidly as a direct result of advances in molecular biology techniques and applications. Molecular ecology covers a wide field, much of which is applicable to applied entomological research, from detection and quantification of predator-prey (or host-parasitoid) interactions to the phylogenetics of, and gene flow amongst, important pests and their natural enemies. A second major area is that of modelling and statistics, particularly in relation to the temporal and spatial dynamics of pests. As computers have become more powerful and accessible, great advances have been made in this area and powerful tools are now available to us. Much of the software has been developed in institutions and by individuals directly involved with crop protection and applied entomological research. Finally I would like to continue to encourage papers that address, through their own particular model systems in applied entomology, fundamental questions in the ecology, biology and behaviour of insects.

In future, particularly important papers in any area covered by the journal, but especially the three discussed above (molecular ecology, modelling and statistics, fundamental ecology), will be fast-tracked to ensure rapid publication. That is not to say that the others will be delayed – far from it. The aim will be to reduce the time between receipt of a paper and final publication as much as possible. We will institute a new system utilising specialist Subject Editors, who will deal rapidly and efficiently with papers in their particular areas of expertise. Authors of papers that require major revision, but with the potential to result in a high quality publication, will be asked to revise and resubmit their papers as a new submission. Papers requiring minimal modification will be sent by the Subject Editors to John Badmin, the Executive Editor, for stylistic editing before being returned to the authors, who will be expected to complete the requested changes rapidly. New members of the Board of Editors will be recruited to ensure that none are overloaded, enabling us to keep delays to a minimum. I would like to see rapid processing times for papers to become a major feature of the journal. As you may have read in Mark Tatchell's editorial in the February 2001 issue, much has been done in this area already.

I am well aware that there are many scientists from non-English speaking backgrounds who wish to publish in the *Bulletin*, but whose command of written English is an obstacle. Under the current system linguistic difficulties can lead to the rejection of a paper, often because the referees find it difficult to understand precisely what was done in an experiment. To help people in this position, and to encourage more papers from as wide a range of countries as possible, I wish to gradually introduce a system of 'Linguistic Authors'. This would not be a translation service. Rather, these linguistic authors would be people prepared to work with the authors of papers to bring their work up to a high standard of written English and who would, in return, be listed amongst the authors of the paper (though clearly marked as being linguistic authors). This will be an entirely voluntary service open to those who think they might benefit from it. However, authors must continue to submit papers, in the first instance, that are as clear as they can possibly make them. Only papers that are, in the opinion of the Editors, of high quality will be sent to a linguistic author.

Finally, we hope that the new eye-catching design for the journal will help to symbolise the changes we are instituting. Appearance is, however, less important than content. We will commission major reviews and critiques in areas we wish to encourage which will help to lead the journal in the direction in which we wish it to go. I am confident that by creating the right platform we will attract an increasing flow of the highest quality papers.

Bill Symondson
Editor-in-Chief