

Editorial

I write with the aim of keeping subscribers and readers informed about forthcoming changes concerning *Polar Record*, the journal of the Scott Polar Research Institute, that is published by Cambridge University Press. Many will be aware that the journal dates from 1931 and that its name arises from the need to record activity in polar areas, and in those days this largely consisted in setting out the heroic deeds of the various pioneering expeditions. The very first issue (priced at 1 shilling or 5 pence in today's currency!) contained information about Mawson's British Australian New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition, Byrd's first Antarctic Expedition and referred to the then recent deaths of Nansen, Sverdrup and Royds.

Recent readers will know it has evolved over time into a journal of Arctic and Antarctic research although it has always remained faithful to its original brief and enthusiastic historians of polar exploration will find much of interest in its pages. One notable feature of the journal has been its remarkably low turnover rate of Editors. There have only been three since 1983; Bernard Stonehouse, Beau Riffenburgh and myself.

Hitherto it has appeared in hard copy format, at 4 issues per year with 384 pages, but a few years ago the opportunity was taken to embrace modern technology more closely by publishing articles 'on line' as well as in print. This enabled a significant reduction in the time taken to bring papers before the public and this has been appreciated by those authors who hold academic posts since 'on line' publication 'counts' for performance indicators. Our record from an article arriving on my desk, through the process of refereeing, to publication is a little over two weeks. This, and a general increase in awareness of the journal among scholars, with a concomitant stimulus to submit to it, has resulted in a 'pile up' of articles awaiting traditional publication.

A further point is that some time ago it was decided to cease presenting book reviews, obituaries etc in the hard copy version. These are listed on the back cover of each issue together with an indication of how to log on to access them. The reason for this was to increase the number of pages available for articles and notes.

With all this in mind and regarding ever present concern about costs, a decision has been made to cease hard copy publication and move towards an 'e' journal.

This will take effect from 2015 onwards. Readers will notice little change in content but if they desire hard copy they will have to print it themselves. There will be a cover as before, but it will be presented 'on line' and with high quality equipment this should present no problem in printing should readers desire to have their own 'bound' copy. Also there will be positive advantages to the new procedure. There will be 6 issues per year with 112 pages in each totalling 672 pages; a very significant increase on the present situation. I am confident that the present rate of submission will enable the extra issues to be filled with thought provoking articles, as is the case at present, and that the reputation of *Polar Record* will remain unsullied. Moreover, there will be no restriction on the use of colour, and the annual subscription charge will be significantly reduced bearing in mind the increase in size. It is presently £109/US\$206 for an individual print and 'on line' subscription and will be £111/US\$213 for an individual 'on line' only subscription in 2015. It is hoped that this might increase uptake of subscriptions.

There remains the problem of Editorship. Readers will be aware that we now enjoy the invaluable involvement of Nikolas Sellheim of the University of Lapland as Reviews Editor and his efforts are much appreciated. But there is no doubt that six issues per year will require much more work than is the case at present; more than I feel I can devote to the task in the long term. I am getting well on into my 70s and feel that after 2016, it would be time finally to blunt my pen. I shall, by then, have been in the 'hot seat' for just over 10 years.

The intention of Cambridge University Press is to secure the appointment of a Deputy Editor, to take over the work from me gradually with the aim of a definitive transfer of responsibility at the end of that year. I should be delighted to discuss the matter with any party interested in the appointment and indeed would welcome correspondence on any matter set out in this Editorial.

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