Editor's Message

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This issue of *Hydrogeology Journal* (*HJ*) is the last to be published for IAH by the Heise Publishing Company of Hannover, Germany. Coming a year after the termination, also by mutual agreement, of the contract for Heise to publish the IAH book series, this issue therefore marks the end of a 15-year association between IAH and the Heise Company. This editorial provides an opportunity for me, as someone who has been active in the running of IAH for nearly all that time, to publicly mark this point in the development of our Association. In particular, it gives me a chance to honour four colleagues who have had key roles in the partnership.

But first, why the change of publisher? Times change, and a continuing association does not fit in with the future perspectives of either organisation. IAH needs to associate with a publisher with a more international scientific and technical focus. When the agreement was initiated, the majority of IAH members were in Europe, but over the 15 years, the membership has tripled, and the majority now lives outside Europe. The nature of scientific journal publishing is expected to change radically over the next ten years, with much more widespread use of electronic media, and this factor must inevitably weigh heavily in a publishing plan for an international professional society. Heise Publishing is a major publisher in Germany and Europe for technical trade journals, but scientific technical publications are not part of their core business.

The parting has been an amicable one, as befits what has been a cordial partnership with a common understanding of respective goals of the two organisations. This spirit stemmed from the development of the original partnership between Egon Groba, IAH Treasurer for 17 years during 1972-89, and Christian Heise, President of the Company. Egon was seeking a cost-effective means of making available to the IAH membership the memoirs and reports produced by the IAH Commissions, often as contributions to the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO, and he found a ready response from a company keen to diversify its interests. Thus began the "blue series" and the "green series" of publications, which totaled 21 volumes between 1984 and 1996. In recognition of his contribution to the work of the Association, IAH was pleased to make Christian Heise an honorary member of the Association in 1989, an honour that was also bestowed on Egon himself in 1995.

Much of this activity took place during the time that Erik Romijn was Secretary-General and then President of IAH. Erik played a major part in administering the contract with the Heise Company, as well as contributing significantly to some of the memoirs. However, Erik strongly held the view that the defining characteristic of a successful and worthwhile society was to publish a respected scientific journal, and he worked to achieve this end with the strong support of the Heise Company. The person who came forward to turn that vision into reality was uniquely qualified, by personality and scientific standing, to do the job. Gene Simpson, then lately retired from the faculty of the University of Arizona at Tucson, became the founding Editor of the journal, then called *Applied Hydrogeology*. He developed the concept of a truly international journal, where contributions of quality and value from throughout the world would find their place. Such a journal would help to chart the development of hydrogeological science and practice and to assist in technology transfer, particularly to developing nations. On the condition that submissions to the Journal had high scientific merit, he was willing, with the help of co-editors and other colleagues, to try and overcome barriers of language and geography to get good ideas and worthwhile findings into English and into print. Sadly, Gene is no longer with us, but he will be honoured again in the next issue of *HJ*, the first issue of the journal with our new publisher. This issue will be specially dedicated to his memory, his work, and his research themes.

Many others have played key roles in developing the IAH publications that these four started. The quality and professionalism of IAH publications has grown under the stewardship of Ian Simmers, who now oversees the book publication series. I know that Gene would have been proud of what our current *HJ* editors, Cliff Voss and Bill Wilson, have achieved in meeting the technical goals he set. Finally, Steve Steinkraus of the Heise Company has been a true friend of IAH in helping us with our various publishing ventures. Indeed, a significant proportion of our members join IAH primarily because of *HJ*, and, as Erik Romijn foresaw, our journal has become a key part of our *raison d'être*.

The opportunities of electronic information dissemination are important to IAH as to all similar societies, but we have to be mindful that, for many of our members, information via the printed page is going to be the most reliable and accessible means of communication for some time to come. With the solid base now established, with the expectation of moving to six issues a year, and with the ability to harness new publishing developments and publishing media, I believe that IAH is well placed to meet its goals and serve its members. We have good reason to thank the Heise Company for helping IAH to be in this favourable position.

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