



Editorial – January 1998

1998 is the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the OR Society. In 1948 an OR Club was formed and the name was changed to the OR Society in 1953. A number of commemorative events are being organised including a special issue of the Journal later this year containing papers concerning the foundations, development and success of OR groups. Long standing readers of JORS and trivia buffs will be interested to note that the silver jubilee was celebrated in 1972!

I would like to take this opportunity to announce some changes to the Journal's support team. First of all I would like to welcome Terry Williams of Strathclyde University as an additional Associate Editor. Terry will look after papers in the project management, stochastic processes, risk, forecasting and defence areas. He joins Tony Christer (maintenance, replacement, reliability, insolvency and operations management) and Roger Hartley (optimisation, decision analysis, game theory, economics and networks/graphs) who have given sterling service for many years.

Secondly, I have decided to appoint 'Topic Advisors' in some popular areas outside the existing editors expertise. Their role as experts in their field is to appraise papers as they are received and advise on their potential worth (should they be sent to referees?). In addition they will help to adjudicate in cases where referees disagree. I welcome Chris Potts, Southampton University, who is covering scheduling and Roy Johnston, Warwick University, who looks after inventory control papers. Both have given valuable support in recent months.

As editor I aim to improve the service given to authors, referees and readers of the Journal. In 1997 we published 129 papers (excluding book reviews and Viewpoints). For these papers the time from receipt of original manuscript to publication averaged 19.2 months, comprising 13.6 months from receipt to acceptance and 5.6 months from acceptance to publication. On average 1.7 revisions per paper were required. I hope it will be possible to improve on the figures although the response time for revision by authors is, of course, outside our control and referees seem to find increasing demands on their time.

One of my stated aims for the Journal at the start of my editorship was to increase the proportion of case studies and real application of OR but as the following figures show I have not managed to make progress yet.

	1996	1997
General	8 (5.9%)	11 (8.5%)
Case-oriented papers	34 (25.2%)	28 (21.7%)
Theoretical	54 (40.0%)	54 (41.9%)
Technical Notes	39 (28.9%)	36 (27.9%)
Total	135	129

Like my predecessors, I give priority to case-oriented papers, which use real data to demonstrate that significant improvements could result from the application of OR, usually a development of existing theory. Unfortunately, few of these describe the implementation and use of the new methods which are necessary for a true case study. I would like to publish such case studies even if new theory is not involved, so long as the full context is described, model testing and validation is included and implementation issues are comprehensively covered, including any lessons learned. (The relevant guidance for authors and referees is being updated.) Whilst my optimism for persuading practitioners to write such case studies has somewhat dimmed, following initial soundings, I have not given up! I also welcome theoretical papers and technical notes which are essential to the long term success of OR practice. The 1996 citation indices have, as I write this, just been published. Once again JORS is the highest placed non-US OR journal. My aim is to maintain this academic standing whilst attracting papers which are relevant to the practice of OR.

Finally, I would like to thank our publishers, Stockton Press for enabling JORS to be available in electronic form during 1998. Subscribers and ORS members will be given the option of a hard copy or electronic version, with a small premium if both are required. This will dramatically improve our service to overseas subscribers. Further details from <http://www.stocktonpress.co.uk>. I also hope to use the OR Society's rapidly developing web site, 'Live OR' (<http://www.orsoc.org.uk>) to provide a discussion forum for various aspects of JORS in the coming months.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all authors, referees and the JORS support team for their valued support during 1997. May I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year.

John C Ranyard