



## Editorial

After five years this is my final issue as Editor of the Journal. I now hand over to Terry Williams and John Wilson, the current Associate Editors, who will share the role from the January 2002 issue. They have provided sterling service during the last couple of years and my experience of working with them indicates that the journal is in two safe pairs of hands. I wish them well.

I have greatly enjoyed my Editorship, despite the rigours of the monthly deadlines and the—often conflicting—advice from referees and authors! Indeed early on I wondered if I had made the right decision in taking on the job, given the strongly held views of some referees and authors, my lack of a strong mathematical background and the relentless flow of new papers! And this was despite my not having a parallel full-time job, as had my predecessors. I was, however, greatly helped by my immediate predecessor, Graham Rand (who deserves my special thanks for handing over the Journal in such good shape and for his generous support in the early days) and the experienced Associate Editors, Roger Hartley and Tony Christer. Once I had appointed Topic Advisors for Scheduling and Inventory Control—and adjusted my life to the rhythms of the activities involved—I began to enjoy the job. Although I was told, perhaps jokingly, that because of the nature of the job I would make enemies but not friends, I have found this not to be the case. Indeed I have had occasional letters of praise, which greatly add to the job satisfaction and I have enjoyed meeting authors and referees at conferences. Hopefully those authors whose papers I did not publish and those referees whose advice I chose not to take, recognised my difficulty in balancing conflicting views.

In my first Editorial, January 1997, I expressed the hope (as had my predecessors) that I might increase the number of case study papers, particularly from practitioners. I have failed to do this, although I did stimulate a discussion of, and revision to, the guidelines for practice papers. In addition we introduced the requirement for all authors to submit a statement summarising the contribution of their paper to both the theory and practice of OR. During my time as Editor I can only recall receiving two unsolicited papers from practitioners, though several other papers were submitted by practitioners with academic partners. However I have increased the proportion of case-oriented papers published (1996—25%; 2001—36%). These use real data to demonstrate that improved decision making can result from the approach described. Sadly, few report on implementation, successful or not. It is now up to my successors to take up the challenge.

I would like to thank the many people who have helped me during my Editorship. As well as the Associate Editors, whom I have already mentioned, I would like to thank the Topic Advisors on Inventory Control (Roy Johnston, 1998–2000; Roger Hill, 2001) and Scheduling (Chris Potts, 1998–2001) for their comprehensive and expert assessments. John Wilson (1992–1998) and John Crocker (1999–2001) skillfully managed the Book Reviews section. The International Advisory Board provided helpful advice and acted as a sounding board on many occasions. Our publishers Palgrave (MacMillan) provided marketing expertise and guidance and I am indebted to both Harry Holt and latterly David Bull for their energetic and wise guidance. Journal production was ably handled initially by Nigel McNeil-Smith, followed by Sarah Bywaters and latterly Pauline Cripps and I would particularly like to thank Pauline for her good humour and acceptance of my enthusiasm for football! Techset provided an excellent typesetting service and I would like to thank Ivor Friel, Bill Rutledge, Lisa Trueman and Becky Gardner for their help and flexibility, particularly when my other activities clashed with their priorities. Simone Larche has maintained the on-line version of JORS on the Palgrave website, thus enabling instant access to each issue as it is published. At the end of the production process, printing and distribution of the Journal has been the responsibility of Unwin Brothers Ltd. Having said all of this I must also acknowledge all authors for supplying papers and referees for their essential work in enabling a peer reviewed journal such as JORS to function in the first place.

Finally, my greatest thanks go to Christine Faulkner, the Journal's Editorial Administrator, for her hard work and good humoured support over the last 5 years. She is, of course, well known to authors and referees as the main point of contact with JORS. As a result she has a good understanding of most of our contributors, which has enabled her to provide me with invaluable advice which has been highly appreciated.

I believe that the Journal is well placed to meet future challenges. There is a healthy supply of papers awaiting publication and (after a hiccup last year) JORS is again the most highly cited non-US OR journal. It is with many regrets that I hand over the reins to the new Editors but I believe they too (eventually) will find the job both stimulating and enjoyable.

JC Ranyard