

## Editorial

# Valedictory Editorial



John A Hudson, Editor-in-Chief, 1983–2006

## Transfer of the Editor-in-Chief role

After 23 years as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, it is now time for me to pass the helm to Professor Robert Zimmerman of the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. As explained in the earlier Editorial in Issue 1 this year, in anticipation of my ISRM Presidential role for the period 2007–11, last August I asked Robert if he would become a Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal. He accepted and has been processing 50% of the submitted manuscripts since then. He has now also agreed to become the sole Editor-in-Chief, as from 31 March 2006.

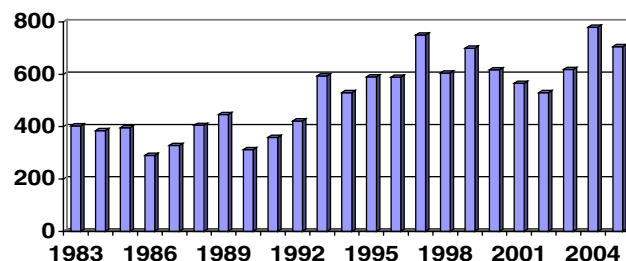
I will, however, retain an active role as Emeritus Editor continuing to process those papers still in my system, dealing with long-term solicited papers, Special Issues still being prepared, and ISRM publications. So, although this Editorial is titled “Valedictory Editorial”, the ‘bidding farewell’ refers only to the Editor-in-Chief role.

Since this will be my last Editorial, I should like to take the opportunity to highlight the Journal developments and related events that have occurred in the period 1983–2005 and to give thanks to those who have helped me.

## Quantity of manuscripts and associated correspondence

The most significant development has been the increase in the number of manuscripts submitted and the associated number of articles published. The number of manuscripts submitted per year has risen from 67 in 1983 to 212 in 2005 with 2966 manuscripts having been submitted during my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, i.e. up to the date of writing this on 13 March 2006. Currently, new manuscripts are arriving at an average rate of four/week.

This has involved a considerable amount of manuscript processing over the years. We have kept a record of all outgoing correspondence in an annual ‘dayfile’, and hence we know how many letters and other items of correspondence have been produced. The number of items of correspondence sent out from our Editorial office/year is summarised in the histogram below: a total of 11,915 items from 1983 to 2005.



Number of items of correspondence sent out by the Editor-in-Chief/year for the period 1983–2005.

## Thanks to Carol and Linda

Naturally, dealing with all the manuscripts and generating this amount of correspondence requires Editorial support and for this I express my heartfelt and deepest thanks to the two ladies in the photograph: Carol Hudson, my wife and the Associate Editor, and Linda Moore, Journal Secretary.



Linda Moore, Journal Secretary (left) and Carol Hudson, Associate Editor (right)

In fact Carol has supported my endeavours for most of my life. In 1956, almost 50 years ago, when as a schoolboy I wished to type up a list of caves in the British Isles but had no typewriter of my own, I borrowed Carol's father's typewriter and, in his dental surgery, typed up the list—with Carol correcting me as I typed. She has checked almost everything that I have written since, and assisted in all the publishing projects. Luckily, both of us went to school when the British education had a heavy emphasis on English language, especially correct grammar and the ability to condense text. At the time, we were not aware why such subjects were important, but we have had plenty of opportunities to practise since!

Linda Moore has been the Journal Secretary for 20 years, from 1987 to 2006. If one were outlining the attributes of an ideal Journal secretary, the list would be as follows: has a degree in English, can type as fast as one can dictate, can operate a computerised manuscript tracking system, is industrious, conscientious and honest, is even-tempered and arrives for work either on time or early. Linda has all these attributes and so it has been a delight to work with her over the years. At two mornings/week for 20 years, Linda has visited my Journal office on about 2000 occasions—and we have never had a cross word. Thank you, Linda.

### Thanks to the reviewers

Reviewing the manuscripts is a particularly important activity which ensures that the high calibre of the Journal articles is maintained: Elsevier place emphasis on the importance of this peer review process. Accordingly, my thanks also go to the reviewers on the Journal's Editorial Board and those members of the rock mechanics and rock engineering community at large who have assisted me with the manuscript reviewing. This is unpaid 'pro bono' work and so I am grateful to this select group and especially to

those who have contributed above and beyond the normal call of duty. Because there have been so many reviewers, it would be inappropriate and it would prejudice their anonymity to mention all the specific names, but there has been a central core who have unrelentingly written excellent and extensive reviews. Thank you all.

### Most significant change in the origin of manuscripts: those from China

Apart from the increase in the number of submitted manuscripts over the years, another significant change has been the increase in the number of manuscripts submitted from China. In the 1990s, these manuscripts were often difficult to deal with because most of the authors had not seen the Notes for Contributors. Additionally, the quality of the English was generally low. One naturally has sympathy for the Chinese authors—I certainly could not write a paper in Chinese—but, at the same time, the standards of the Journal have to be upheld. However, I am pleased to say that, as the years have gone by, this situation has improved markedly and now the state of many submitted Chinese manuscripts is acceptable 'as is'. This problem, of course, refers only to the formatting and English quality of the Chinese manuscripts. The technical quality is often superb. In fact, I would say that there are more innovative ideas in rock mechanics emanating from China than from anywhere else and, given the spectacular growth of the Chinese nation and their continuing emphasis on science and technology, these pioneering Chinese advances are likely to continue to be generated at an even faster rate.

### Journal initiatives

In addition to the regular Issues with the usual run of papers and technical notes, we have published a variety of Special Issues with geographic, subject and conference themes.

My favourite Special Issue is the 319-page Issue produced in 2003 on Rock Stress Estimation, guest-edited by Francois Cornet. Stress, as a boundary condition, is an essential component of a mechanics problem, yet the full implications of its tensorial character can be difficult to grasp, its components cannot be measured directly, and the distribution of rock stress through the geological structures in the Earth's crust is not easily modelled. This particular Special Issue contains the four new ISRM suggested methods on rock stress estimation produced by my ISRM Commission on Testing Methods and 17 supporting papers—which together represent the state of rock stress estimation today and which can be summarised by saying, "Stress estimation is not an easy task".

The Issues dedicated to conference proceedings have been the following:

- 34th US Rock Mechanics Symposium held in Madison, Wisconsin in 1993;

- 36th US Rock Mechanics Symposium held in New York in 1997;
- NARMS Symposium held in Cancun, Mexico in 1998 and the
- SINOROCK2004 Symposium held at the Three Gorges Dam Project site on the Yangtze river in China in 2004.

In all cases, these proceedings took the form of printed abstracts and a CD containing the full papers.



The SINOROCK2004 Symposium, with its logo above, was a special initiative because it was organised by the Journal itself in association with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and featured a Lawn Banquet as shown in the photograph below.



Lawn banquet at the SINOROCK2004 Symposium organised by the Journal in association with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. (Note: Charles Fairhurst, with his back to us in the left Foreground, is the only person who has been on the Journal's Editorial Board for its whole existence, 1964–present.)

Readers should note that the second SINOROCK Symposium, SINOROCK2009, will be held on 19–22 May 2009 in Hong Kong. The continuing SINOROCK theme is: Integration of Rock Characterisation, Modelling and Engineering Design Methods. The Symposium Co-Chairmen will be Xia-Ting Feng of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Leslie George Tham of Hong Kong University and myself. Further information on this Symposium will be made available in due course.

### Other initiatives connected to the Journal

There have been two major Elsevier initiatives connected with the Journal's subject matter.

*The first initiative* was the compilation of Elsevier's "Comprehensive Rock Engineering", a five-Volume, 4407-page compendium, edited by myself as Editor-in-Chief supported by Ted Brown, Charles Fairhurst and Evert Hoek as Volume Editors, and published in 1993. The Volume titles were:

- Volume 1: Fundamentals;
- Volume 2: Analysis and Design Methods;
- Volume 3: Rock Testing and Site Characterization;
- Volume 4: Excavation, Support and Monitoring;
- Volume 5: Surface and Underground Project Case Histories.

To date, this is the only encyclopaedic work devoted to the subject of rock mechanics and rock engineering. Unfortunately, the compendium was produced just before the widespread distribution of electronic files was introduced, is now out of print, and further copies are unobtainable.

*The second initiative* was the establishment of the Elsevier Geo-Engineering Book Series of which I will continue to be Editor-in-Chief. So far, four books have been published in this series:

- "Stability analysis and modelling of underground excavations in fractured rocks" by Weishen Zhu and Jian Zhao;
- "Coupled thermo-hydro-mechanical-chemical processes in geo-systems" edited by Ove Stephansson, John A. Hudson and Lanru Jing;
- "Ground Improvement—Case Histories" edited by Buddhima Indraratna and Jian Chu and
- "Engineering Properties of Rocks" by Lianyang Zhang.

If any reader has a proposal for a future book in this series, please send it to me at the email address at the end of the Editorial.

### The paradigm shift to electronic submission

The greatest change in the Journal's *modus operandi* will occur on 31 March 2006 when we switch from hard copy submission and correspondence to a totally electronic system via the author gateway in Elsevier's electronic system at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ijrmms>. Not only will the manuscript submission be electronic but so also will be all the manuscript processing, i.e. all reviewing and author contacts.

Electronic submission and correspondence will have many advantages, including a faster rate of manuscript processing and removal of hard copy postal charges. There could be some disadvantages at the outset, in particular

that it will be a more ‘clinical’ system, lacking the personal touch, which I have always endeavoured to include in my contacts with authors and reviewers. Additionally, reviewers will take time to become accustomed to assessing electronic manuscripts on screen.

Most readers will already be familiar with Elsevier’s sciencedirect.com website where pdfs of all previous Journal papers can now be downloaded. This facility is so useful and speedy that, despite having all hard copy Issues of the Journal on a shelf in my office, I still find it more efficient to look up a paper on [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com), rather than go through the paper Issues. In the same way, and given that the world will continue to speed up, I have no doubt that, once we are all fluent with the new electronic system, we will not then wish to return to the ‘snail mail’ method of operation—although it will be fondly remembered.

#### **Thanks for Elsevier’s continuing support**

It only remains for me to thank Elsevier for their continuing support and efficiency throughout the life of the Journal so far: 1964 to the present. The Journal was formed at an opportune time, just one year after the 1963 formation of the International Society for Rock Mechanics, which can be considered as the time when full international recognition of the subject occurred. Throughout the intervening years, from Volume 1 to the current Volume 43, the three editors, Dr. Roberts, Ted Brown and

myself, have endeavoured to bring you the best contributions in our developing subject. Many of these papers chronologically illustrate the gradual development of our understanding of a particular topic. For example, the very first article in Volume 1, Issue 1, concerned the uniaxial compressive strength of rock—and we have been publishing papers on the uniaxial compressive failure of rock ever since!

Throughout this time, Pergamon Press and subsequently Elsevier have always striven to provide every help for the Journal. We currently have plenty of material in press and the Issues are being produced ahead of time. Thus, my thanks go to everyone at Elsevier who has helped and especially during recent years to Nick Pinfield and Maymay Sit for their supremely competent work in, respectively, the strategy and tactics of Journal production.

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So, with a sound ship and a following wind, I now pass the helm to Robert Zimmerman.

*Emeritus Editor*

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