

EDITORIAL

Clay Minerals – Update of June 2001

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You may have noticed a couple of changes on the cover of the Journal, one relating to the Principal Editor, the other to the Journal's online status.

This issue is the first for which I have acted as Principal Editor, following Derek Bain's transfer to a similar position with *Clays and Clay Minerals*. A citation, thanking Derek for his substantial contribution over the last 13 years, was given by Dick Merriman at the recent 125th Anniversary of the Mineralogical Society: it is published on the following page. In addition, on a personal note, I should like to thank Derek for all his time and help during my transition into this new role.

The change of editorship has given me this opportunity to comment on some matters of importance to the future of the journal. First, there is our move into online publishing. Second, I thought it worthwhile to follow the lead of my colleague Simon Redfern (Principal Editor of *Mineralogical Magazine*) in considering a 'mission statement' for *Clay Minerals*, and also the service we provide to actual and prospective authors.

Since March 2000, *Clay Minerals* has been published simultaneously in both electronic and traditional print media. All users of the world wide web can now browse the contents and read the abstracts of all papers published since March 1998. The full-text electronic version is available **at no extra cost** to paper-copy subscribers. You can find more information on how to gain access to the online version of the journal by visiting the Society's web-site at www.minersoc.org. We hope you find this development useful and convenient.

Scientific publishing has experienced a dramatic change in the last few years. The environment is now extremely competitive. Authors seek speed of publication and quality journals with good reputations and citation records, while the pressure on subscriptions means that Libraries continue to purchase only journals supported 'tooth and nail'

by users. Publishers, particularly Learned Society publishers, must work hard to maintain their position in this environment.

Clay Minerals' 'mission' is to publish the best quality papers in the field as quickly as possible, and make them available to the widest possible audience as cheaply as possible. Going online is part of our strategy. Maintaining and improving our service to authors is another.

Clay Minerals covers a wide field, from physics through chemistry to mineralogy and geology, occasionally touching on biology and the environment. I've often been told that this is a major attraction of the journal. I agree and wish to keep it so, to maintain the widest support base. Nonetheless, breadth must not mean dilution of quality and, certainly, our policy is to accept only papers of the highest quality, enhancing the journal's reputation.

As regards our service to authors, a speedy turnaround from submission to publication is essential. Authors, referees, editors and production staff all have a part to play.

Currently, the time from acceptance to publication is about nine months. We continue to work to reduce this time, as well as the time which elapses between submission and acceptance, though this factor is less within our control, as we rely on the services of volunteer expert reviewers.

Speed, of course, is only one criterion. Production quality is another on which we focus. I think that papers in *Clay Minerals* look good, and hope that you agree.

Overall, it is only by focusing on our customer bases, authors and users, that we will maintain the position of *Clay Minerals*. Work is continuing to develop electronic access further to extend our user base significantly. Thematic issues may have a greater role than at present. We hope that such activity will ensure a healthy future for the journal. Join me in wishing it well.