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EDITORIAL

Subtle signs, subtle designs: future change and *BJR*

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What an honour it is to have been accepted as the incoming Honorary Editor (Scientific) of the *British Journal of Radiology* (*BJR*) as of September 2012.

It is also a matter of great pride and fortune that I find myself taking over the reins from Professor Roger G. Dale; my professional life started some 35 years ago, under his direct tutelage. On behalf of the journal, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roger for all his hard-work, working closely with Dr Jane Phillips-Hughes in helping to steer *BJR* through a period of considerable change.

Although it would be foolhardy to believe that I might ever fill the boots previously occupied by Roger Dale or indeed of those preceding him, hopefully my prior experience as Editor-in-Chief of the journals *Radiation Physics and Chemistry* and *Applied Radiation and Isotopes* will be found to be more than simply useful. The world of academic publishing is in transition, the prime drivers including the move towards electronic publishing and Open Access content. Each should be considered as a positive development, favouring readers and publishers alike. *BJR* is strongly engaged in this process, taking many proactive steps in ensuring that it thrives in this increasingly sophisticated environment.

In my brief time in the role so far *BJR* has introduced an open access option, BIROpen. This allows authors of accepted articles the opportunity to pay an author processing charge in order to make their article freely available upon publication under a creative common licence.

Another move for *BJR* is the transition to continuous publication for 2013. From the start of 2013, all articles will be rapidly published online with their final citation. This removes the delay between online advance publication and final print publication. The articles will be cited by an article identifier, rather than a page number, but will still appear in a printed format as usual.

It is in such ways that *BJR* is continuing to live up to the imperatives embodied in the 1958 Royal Charter of Incorporation to the British Institute of Radiology, in particular:

- to promote and encourage the study and practice of the art and science of radiology, radiobiology and the medical applications of nuclear science in all their aspects and the study of kindred sciences
- to maintain and extend to the public advantage the usefulness of the work of the radiologist, radiobiologist, physicist, radiographer and X-ray

engineer in the field of medicine and in the expanding field of the industrial application of radioactive substances

- to disseminate knowledge concerning all aspects of the science of radiology, radiobiology and the medical applications of nuclear science.

As the new boy, I am currently seeking to better understand those topics that both represent the state-of-the-art in radiology and attract the greatest interest. It is clear, for instance, that reviews enjoy considerable prominence among the more highly cited articles, also attracting a prolonged citation half-life. So what might such realisation mean for the journal? Personally, I would like to see a balanced approach, attracting potential high impact reviews as well as papers highlighting state-of-the-art applications and papers pointing to future applications of new science. Some of the most highly cited *BJR* articles in the past 2 years have been in the fields of radiobiology, medical physics and the underpinning science and technology;

see for instance [1–3], a small number of examples from the top 20 most cited *BJR* articles in 2012. As the Honorary Editor covering the scientific, rather than the medical, aspects, I am looking forward to seeing more of such content during my post with *BJR*. Almost certainly, a number of these articles will go on to have an extended lifetime. To paraphrase Jackson [4], *BJR* continues to rank highly in terms of its cited half-life, demonstrating that the articles it publishes continue to be of importance for far longer than those in many comparable journals with client impact factors. I further endorse the observation “that it reflects the nature of the publication strategy for *BJR*, which reflects translational and clinical imaging studies capable of influencing practice over a sustained period of time”; the words “therapeutic radiology” added to that observation would have made the statement simply perfect. To perceive the most subtle signs of change and to have ready sophisticated designs towards achieving the best of outcomes are familiar desires of the readers and publisher of *BJR*.

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