

Few endeavours in life achieve excellence—if they do it at all—only after lengthy exertions and after many years. For our new Journal there was a chance, in fact a necessity, to start with excellence in the first quarterly issue. We decided that there was only one way, namely an Editorial Board of the highest eminence in science.

Farago and I therefore wrote or talked to those of our friends whom we considered as eminent and who we thought would be helpful. We pointed out the kind of articles we wanted to publish, and told them that their taste would be small, occasionally reading the 500 word synopsis of a proposed article, our modified referee system. We could not offer any kind of payment, only a free subscription to the Journal, and a splendid annual lunch or dinner at an Oxford or Cambridge College or a London Club, at least for the first 15 years.

We were both pleasantly surprised how many acceptances we received to our invitations. As our reviews were to be concerned with so many different scientific disciplines, we aimed at a large Board, so that at least one subject expert could referee each 500 word synopsis. It was my practise to send the synopsis to five members of the Board, and in case of disagreement, to accept the majority verdict.

Once again I should like to express my warmest thanks for the unselfish manner in which the Members of the Board have helped me through the many years since the Journal's foundation in 1975. Sadly many of them have died and have been replaced, but those still alive, now only 22 of the original 70, have remained faithful to the spirit of the Journal.

One other way to proclaim the excellence of the Journal in its first issue was open to us—Messages of Welcome from the Presidents of the Royal Society London, the National Academy of Sciences Washington, and the Max-Planck-Society, Munich. Lord Todd wrote: "Today interdisciplinary research is almost universal." Dr Philip Handler wrote: "That which falls 'between the conventional disciplines' should become everyone's business" and Professor Dr Reimar Lüst commented: "Communication between scientists is an essential part of science in a time of growing specialisation."

"A good review is the moral equivalent of teaching" as Dr Maurice Goldhaber, when Director of Brookhaven, used to say to his staff. True, but so far most reviews were written to teach scientists their own discipline. It was one of the aims of ISR, we pointed out, to spread the knowledge of the interdisciplinary approach widely to all scientists reading the Journal.