

ISR

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INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE REVIEWS

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Lord Todd, *President of the Royal Society*

Dr Philip Handler, *President of the National Academy of Sciences*

Professor Dr Reimar Lüst, *President of the Max-Planck-Society*

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Director of the National Science Foundation.
Science Adviser to the
President of the U.S.A.

Sir Alan Cottrell, F.R.S.

Master of Jesus College, Cambridge.
Formerly Chief Science Adviser to the
British Government

Prof. Dr Manfred Eigen

Nobel Laureate. Director of the
Max-Planck-Institut für
Biophysikalische Chemie, Göttingen
and **Dr Ruthild Winkler-Oswatitsch**

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Experimental Station, Hertfordshire

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Centre d'Energie Nucléaire, Saclay, France

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and **Dr U. Faust**
Uhde GmbH, Dortmund

HEYDEN

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Cover of the first Issue of ISR, containing the Messages of Welcome and the scoop of the first English description of the natural atomic reactor at Oklo in Gabon.

On 29 March 1976, the first issue of *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* was published and copies were given out at a Press Conference at the Royal Society in London. It represented the final climax of 18 months of hard work and was not achieved without a last-minute drama. The printers, J.W. Arrowsmith of Bristol could only deliver the first batch of copies during the late afternoon of 28 March, and therefore Gunter Heyden and I had to drive halfway to Bristol to meet the lorry bringing us copies of the Journal.

Our team of four, Gunter Heyden, Peter Williams, Peter Farago and myself were very proud of the handsome appearance of our publication, with its three yellow horizontal bands across the front cover and the contents list filling the space between the bands. This design has remained the standard ever since then, now for more than 20 years. Only the colour of the bands and the background colour of the cover have changed from time to time.

The first page was a repeat of the contents list, its second page contained the three messages of welcome and on page *iii* the Editorial by the Executive Editor [ARM] and the Consultant [PF] began. We called it *Future Affirmative*. We defined what we called interdisciplinary science, gave a brief history how this concept had arisen from Operational Research during World War II and how it had developed into Systems Engineering. We gave the specifications of the three types of articles which we were going to publish and used the articles in the first issue as our examples.

We were particularly proud of the article *The Oklo Nuclear Reactor: 1800 Million Years ago** which was the first description in English to appear anywhere in print. (An article about this natural atomic reactor had been published in French before, but even the *Scientific American* did not give an American version until many months later.) It was a real scoop in the first issue! I had been to Gabon in West Africa where the Oklo River gave the name to the large open-cast uranium mines in which the prehistoric natural reactors had functioned so long ago.

I had taken part in the 'International Symposium on the Oklo Phenomenon' which took place at Libreville, Gabon, in June 1975, where I had met the author of our article, M. Roger Naudet from the Centre d'Énergie Nucléaire, Saclay, France. I was able to persuade him to write how he had contributed to this amazing discovery, and his manuscript was translated by Peter Farago just in time for the first issue of ISR. I had a special map of Gabon drawn for this article by Frank Horrabin, the well-known British Map Artist.

* Title of Article in I S R Journal (*...*).