

Ground under in the literature

C. T. Shaw

Mining Science & Technology. Editors C.O. Brawer and B.N. Whittaker. Elsevier. 4/yr. Dfl. 244, \$84.13.

IN THE editorial in the first issue of *Mining Science & Technology*, the editors state that the journal "caters for the ever-changing needs of the mining and minerals industries"; their aim is "to provide a forum for the mining industry to publish the results of new research, to describe changes and new developments in mining procedures, to review design considerations and regulations and to present interesting case examples"; and they hope to "cover all aspects of the extraction of solid mineral materials from the earth".

These are grandiose aims, which thus far have led to a rather unfocused journal. Moreover a number of established journals, particularly the transactions of the appropriate learned institutions, already provide just such a forum. *Mining Science & Technology*, it seems, will not cover any area not already served by an existing publication.

The journal is attracting contributions from all over the mining world, though most of them have come from the United Kingdom (fifteen), the United States (eleven) and Canada (six). Papers from seven other countries have been published. In the seven issues which I have seen, there is a strong representation of members of the editorial board in the list of authors; in only one is there no paper from this source. This is perhaps understandable, but when note is also taken that nine papers have emanated from Nottingham, where one of the editors is based, one gains the impression that the journal has not yet reached the crucial stage where it generates its own flow of material.

As regards content, about half of the contributions have been in the general



area of rock mechanics and strata control (22 out of 43, though three of these dealt with fill materials). The rest have covered a variety of topics of interest to the mining industry. The quality is patchy, and some of the papers have been little more than technical notes. Such notes are of course useful to the practising mining engineer, but there are other, better outlets for this sort of communication.

The journal indicates the dates of receipt and acceptance of papers, but it is not clear what the arrangements are for refereeing. The time between receipt and

acceptance in one case was as short as four days and there are a number at five days, which does not seem to imply a very vigorous review procedure. There has been a wide range of time between the receipt of the paper and its appearance — between four and fourteen months — but the average seems to be six to nine months. The standard of production, however, is high, with clear text and illustrations, and there is no advertising other than the occasional puff for other Elsevier journals; for the reader, this is no small advantage.

Generally, only research papers are published. There are occasional book reviews, but these appear infrequently and such intermittent coverage hardly seems worthwhile. Similarly there is often, but not always, a page entitled "Announcements" which has notices of forthcoming

meetings, but this again is very limited in content and there are other places where much more comprehensive information can be obtained. Finally, one issue has carried brief reports on recent conferences, but that struck me as little more than filler material serving no real purpose.

Despite these adverse points, *Mining Science & Technology* is clearly still settling in to the market and a little longer will be needed before it can be decided whether it will attract papers of sufficient standing to make it indispensable to a mining engineer's library. For the time being, then, judgement must be reserved. □

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A cosmopolitan air

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Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry. Editors Paul J. Crutzen and Dieter H. Ehhalt. Reidel. 4/yr. Dfl. 216, \$76 (institutional); Dfl. 110, \$39 (individual).

INCREASING awareness of the impact of human activities on the atmosphere has recently led to a marked rise in research on atmospheric chemistry, on scales varying from the regional to the global. Changes in atmospheric composition can affect climate, human health, agriculture and water quality in complex and often poorly understood ways.

The *Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry* was initiated to publish research on the chemical interactions between the atmosphere and the solid Earth, the oceans and the biosphere. It is not concerned with air pollution problems on the local scale, but emphasizes the chemistry of the natural atmosphere and how it can be perturbed by human activities. The focus is upon studies of the composition and physical chemical processes in the atmosphere, on laboratory studies of atmospheric homogeneous and heterogeneous transformation processes, and on advances in instrumentation for the measurement of atmospheric composition.

At the time of writing seven issues had been published, with an average of six to seven papers per issue. This is an international journal, which is reflected clearly in an editorial board drawn from 14 nations. The editors have done an excellent job selecting the board; the scientific expertise gathered together here is broad and comprehensive, and the individuals are among the best in the world in their fields. Eighteen nations are represented among the authors of articles published in the first seven issues, further emphasizing the journal's non-parochial character, and among the contributors are some of the

world's leading atmospheric chemists (and not only members of the editorial board!).

To date only regular scientific articles have been published; while book reviews are accepted, none have been published yet, and there appears to be no provision for comments from readers on the contents of previous issues. Speed of publication is difficult to assess, since individual issues do not indicate the month of publication, but the delay appears to be a reasonable five to eight months. A further

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attraction for prospective contributors is that there are no page charges.

There are two other journals which primarily publish atmospheric chemistry papers having a somewhat similar scope. These are *Journal of Geophysical Research — Atmospheres* (published by the American Geophysical Union) and *Tellus B* (published by the Swedish Geophysical Society). *Tellus B*, which has an emphasis on chemical and physical meteorology, was launched as part of the restructuring of *Tellus* at almost the same time that *Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry* began. To start two new international atmospheric chemistry journals almost simultaneously might appear both risky and unnecessary. However, so far the quality of papers has been good in both. With a rapid expansion of research to be expected over the next several years, I believe both journals have a good chance to succeed. □

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