

# So long, farewell.....

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It is with a mixture of sadness and relief that I write this editorial: my final act as editor of *Eye*, a position I've held for the past 12 years, which, if truth be told, is almost a third of my working life. Checking my e-mails will never be the same; no longer will I receive a succession of automated reminders informing me that some urgent decision on a manuscript must be made, or those from Elaine Hudson (editorial assistant) asking me to reply to some disgruntled, unsuccessful author or others.

How things have changed over the last 12 years: when I embarked as the editor, *Eye* was still very much a college journal; the 'editorial office' (which was, in actual fact, a single filing cabinet) was in the Royal College of Ophthalmologists HQ in London. Manuscripts were transported from London to Sheffield, then out to review via a section editor, then back to Sheffield, then returned to the authors for correction before they were forwarded (via Sheffield) to the technical editor, who manually corrected the copy, before they were finally sent to the printers. My decision to move the editorial office to Sheffield led, no doubt, to a significant reduction in the Royal Mail's future profits.

The journal was also very different in 1995: it was published bimonthly and received the majority of its copy from within the United Kingdom. The acceptance rate for manuscripts was well over 80% and the journal's impact factor was significantly less than 1. In writing this, I have no wish, of course, to denigrate the sterling efforts of the previous editor, who almost single-handedly had fashioned the journal out of the old 'Transactions of the OSUK'. It does nevertheless serve as a benchmark for how things have changed.

Although as editor I have, over the years, had to make literally thousands of decisions on

behalf of the Journal, I have no doubt that the most significant one was to agree a partnership being forged between the College and Nature Publishing Group. Through this partnership, we have developed a highly efficient journal, which now receives all manuscripts electronically and publishes them online as well as in paper format. *Eye* has, I believe, gone from strength to strength as a result of this close symbiotic relationship.

When I embarked as editor, I had a number of ambitions for the journal: to be published monthly, to have a significantly improved impact factor, and to be considered a truly international journal while, at the same time, still meeting the needs of the College membership. I'd like to think that I have now realised these ambitions and, although they have taken me perhaps longer to achieve than I would have wished, it is now time for me to stand down.

I am acutely aware that I have not made this journey alone and, indeed, could not have done so without the enormous contributions that have been made by the associate editors, section editors, and all the staff involved with the production of *Eye* at Nature Publishing Group. I thank them all, most sincerely, for their help and support over the years. I should wish to reserve a special thanks to Elaine Hudson, my ever-present Editorial Secretary. Indeed, I often wonder how I ever survived, particularly in the early years, without Elaine's continual expertise and support. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, not only for their support, but also for the freedom and autonomy I have enjoyed as editor of their journal.

Finally, I wish to congratulate Andrew Lotery upon his appointment as editor and to wish him every success in the future. ....auf wiedersein, goodbye.

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