

A chemical century

The launch of *Nature Chemistry* in 2009 prompted some criticism of journal proliferation, but 100 issues later this young offender has matured into an accepted part of the publishing landscape.

The very first issue of *Nature Chemistry* was published on 19 March 2009. Each month since then a new issue of the journal has been delivered to mailboxes (both real and electronic) around the globe, and now, just over eight years later, we've reached a special milestone — the July 2017 issue is the 100th.

Of course, times change and so do editorial teams — the current members are shown at the bottom of this Editorial. Two of the original editors have moved on to pastures new: Neil Withers is the Features Editor at *Chemistry World* (Royal Society of Chemistry, RSC) and Stephen Davey moved within Springer Nature to become the founding Chief Editor of *Nature Reviews Chemistry*. In addition, both Claire Hansell (now an editor at *Nature*) and Thomas Faust (now an editorial community manager at the open-access publisher Hindawi) have been locum editors at *Nature Chemistry*.

When *Nature Chemistry* debuted there weren't very many high-profile general chemistry journals — some of the best known examples were the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* (ACS), *Angewandte Chemie* (Wiley) and *ChemComm* (RSC). Our launch in 2009 was arguably the first of a new order of highly selective chemistry journals that publish relatively few papers each year, including *Chemical Science* (RSC, 2010), *ACS Central Science* (ACS, 2015) and *Chem* (Elsevier, 2016). Other high-volume journals covering the breadth of chemistry have also emerged, such as *RSC Advances* and *ACS Omega*.

The number of chemistry journals continues to increase and readers are faced with an ever-growing avalanche of

literature; even with the most carefully organized RSS feeds, efforts to stay on top of the latest research can easily be ruined in a day. But just as publishers eventually embraced the rise of the internet to put their journals online, many of them are now investigating other ways to make their content stand out from the crowd — notably through sharing on social-media sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

Moreover, the battle for online attention is also now an integral part of research assessment. Citation-based measures remain one of the most prominent indicators of how much a paper is valued, but alternative metrics are growing in popularity. The only way to truly get a sense of whether a paper is important is to read it, but it is easier to count numbers and so proxies (often poor ones) are usually invoked: the Impact Factor of the journal in which the work was published, the number of article page views or downloads, the number of citations (irrespective of context), the attention the paper is getting online and so on. Science should not be driven by these statistics, and besides, even a bad liar probably knows that there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics.

We appreciate that chemistry is incredibly diverse in the real world, both in terms of its practitioners and also how the science itself is defined and undertaken, and not all of our content will be of interest to everyone everywhere. Nevertheless we aim to cover as broad a range of topics as possible, whether it's single-author papers using computational methods to study unusual chemical bonding, or global collaborations on synthetic ion transporters such as the

Article on page 667 of this issue that features researchers from the UK, USA, Portugal and the Republic of Korea.

Our 100th issue also features the 1,000th research Article to appear in the printed journal — and in a somewhat spooky coincidence, it includes the words 'One-thousand' in the title (see page 676). And it seems only fitting that the In Your Element essay in this issue tackles fermium, the element with an atomic number of 100. When we published issue 1 of the journal, there were 111 officially recognized (and named) elements on the periodic table. There are now 118, so the In Your Element feature has a little longer to run.

Finalizing the journal each month involves more than choosing which Articles and associated content to include. Hardcopies mean covers, and covers mean cover lines — short snippets of text highlighting four papers inside each issue. Our content focuses on serious scientific matters, but this is where we sometimes try to have a little fun. Although the puns that appear on the table of contents of *Angewandte Chemie* are often hard to beat, we occasionally manage to slip in a song-based cover line — 'Every MOF you make' is one of our favourites, but we don't regret any of them!

The musical theme has extended into other parts of the journal from time to time: 'Ice ice maybe' was a Research Highlight in the April 2010 issue and 'Shake it off' was a News and Views title in September 2015. Maybe we'll get a whole album's worth of song titles into an Editorial one day. We hope you enjoy our 100th issue and we look forward to having some fun while bringing you the next 100. □



The *Nature Chemistry* editorial team — (L to R) Stuart Cantrill, Gavin Armstrong, Anne Pichon and Russell Johnson, based in London; Marshall Brennan in New York; and Xin Su in Shanghai.