

Editorial

A number of changes are being introduced in the *Journal of the European Ceramic Society* and it may be helpful to describe these briefly in this first issue of Volume 17.

An important innovation is the publication of Theme Issues which will contain refereed reports from meetings held under the auspices of the European Ceramic Society. In recent years, the publication of conference proceedings has occasionally been seen in a somewhat critical light; the comment is made that the quality of papers appearing in such proceedings is often of a lower level than that which is customary for the archival literature. This problem perhaps arises from the fact that two types of paper are commonly presented at conferences. In the first, a speaker may summarise a body of work which has been presented in recent years using such a summary to indicate promising topics for future activity. Under these circumstances, much of the paper will have already appeared in the literature and a printed version of the presentation therefore falls between a critical review and a standard publication. Such papers are undoubtedly of value at the meeting; there is less ground for their reappearance in published form. In the second, the speaker may present completely new work; here, the justification for presenting the work in published form is strong and persuasive.

The presence of these two types of contribution at conferences has resulted in the low level of recognition given to conference proceedings by those engaged, for example, in the appraisal of a scientist's work. A consequence has been that it is now common in a *curriculum vitae* to see separate listings of the papers which have been presented in the archival literature and of those which have been presented in conference proceedings. In many ways, such a reaction is unfortunate because a collection of papers centred around a particular topic can be of great value to those engaged in research.

In seeking a way to resolve the matter, the *Journal of the European Ceramic Society* will now present occasional Theme Issues where papers presented at a meeting and concerned with a significant research topic will be gathered together. It is important to emphasise that the papers included in these issues will be reviewed in precisely the same way as papers in the regular issues. A logical consequence is that the issues will only contain conference contributions of the second type, i.e. where new results are being put forward. This is seen as a possible way to preserve the favourable features of conference proceedings but to avoid the problem which has been widely recognised. The Theme Issues will be fully integrated into the Journal in that they will be co-paginated with the normal issues. They will, however, be distinctive in having a green cover. The first issue will be devoted to the forming of ceramics and it will appear as the next issue of the Journal.

Other changes in the volume are of a smaller kind. A set of book reviews will now be presented on an occasional basis. In a similar way, we shall present occasional reports from the member societies of the European Ceramic Society concentrating in the first instance on the more recent members who have not had the opportunity to report on an earlier occasion.

It is hoped that these changes will enhance the value of the Journal to readers. The presentation of work of the very highest quality with the minimum of delay consistent with thorough reviewing remains the keystone of the Journal's operation.

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