



Howard Wright  
Chairman, Editorial Panel

## Editorial

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This will be my last editorial as I step down as Chairman of the Editorial Panel at the end of October. The three year term seems to have flown by and has been both enjoyable and relatively easy, largely due to the excellent support I have received. The Secretariat at the Institution deserves lots of praise for handling the receipt of manuscripts and their circulation to reviewers and panel members and liaising with Thomas Telford as the final papers get put into print. Thomas Telford also deserve credit for their work on producing a first-rate journal. No list of praise could be complete without the panel members who have sat with me in committee four times a year and adjudicated on papers throughout the three years. And finally my thanks must also go to all of the membership and specialists who have carried out the reviews of papers so diligently.

Casting my mind back over the last three years reminds me that the journal is now published six times a year. This has been made possible by the huge number of papers that are submitted to it. Almost all of these are of excellent standard and a good proportion end up in print. It is interesting to note that many of the papers are received from authors who are resident outside the UK, making the journal truly international. This raises the fact that this group, all of the authors both home and overseas, should also be included on my list of thanks in the last paragraph!

As I step down I have one or two thoughts about the future of the journal and how it will develop. The use of the internet has revolutionised research. Excellent search engines allow masses of information to be available in an instant and often at no direct cost. A significant amount of this information is

produced in good faith but is not peer reviewed and its abbreviated form may be taken out of context. The excellent development of on-line subscription to the Institution's Proceedings will help in ensuring more convenience in access to the peer-reviewed knowledge base of papers in the journals (visit [www.structuresandbuildings.com](http://www.structuresandbuildings.com) for further details). I would commend this facility to all readers.

However the traditional medium of the 5000 word paper does not sit comfortably on a computer screen and certainly does not take advantage of the technology that is becoming available. Video clips, walk-through simulations and dynamic interaction have all been a part of the computer games industry for some years and software editing tools are available for their wider application. I was involved in the development of computer software specifically for teaching in the 1980s and have noted web-based programs being used quite widely in lecture rooms today. This technology could so easily cross over into the knowledge transfer of advanced research and design developments. Quite how we move publication methods from the static paper to the dynamic software program I do not know but I am sure that the need for the authority of peer review will remain and will, most likely, require a form of editorial panel. Consequently the work of the Editorial Panel Chairman is not going to dry up just yet!

This leads me neatly on to the succession of the Chairman. Professor Ian May from Heriot-Watt University has kindly agreed to take on the duties for a three-year term starting in November. I have known Ian for some time and am very sure that he will make a first rate job of steering the journal in the immediate future. I wish him every success.