

EDITORIAL

This is my last issue as editor and I calculate that I have been in that position for 23 years over two distinct periods (1980-85 and 1997-2014). That's over 90 issues, more than enough for any one person!

I took over the position from Richard Bentley, while still living in Wellington. My greatest memory of the early days was collecting the typed up A3 pages, in 2 columns, from a professional typist across town and then having to return to get any errors retyped and cut and pasted (literally) on to the page. Sometimes pages had to be retyped. All the figures and photographs were carefully pasted onto the page in the appropriate place. How times have changed.

Those were the days of NZNSEE Study Group reports published in the Bulletin. For example the Discussion group on the Seismic Design of Bridges (Vo. 13, No. 3, September 1980). There never seemed to be a problem in getting suitable papers for each issue. Papers were promptly reviewed by at least one person and the submission to publishing time was short, usually less than 3 months.

The potentially most embarrassing thing to happen during my tenure was the near publishing of the map of New Zealand upside down! Fortunately I was sent a proof copy of the issue by the printer to check. Luckily I did check every page. I long ago gave up my goal of perfection; I just have to look at the published issue to find some mistake, even though I probably read every word and sentence 3 or 4 times prior to printing. There have been quite a few instances where the contents page had misspelt names on the back page (even my own surname once) compared to the first internal page. I usually claim innocence to those as the back cover was reset by the printer and often not sent back to me for checking.

The second editorial period was when I had moved to Auckland, a place I'm told that doesn't experience earthquakes. That does remind of what many people said about Christchurch *after* the recent 'quakes! It seems to me that nowhere in NZ can you say that it will not experience a damaging earthquake. I took over from long-time editor Peter Moss this time around. The electronic age slowly reached the editorial desk as more papers were submitted electronically, often on floppy disks; remember those? I still pasted up many of the figures on the now A4 pages before sending the copy south. Word processing has come a long way since the mid-1990s but I still have problems with the incompatibilities between Apple Mac and Microsoft software, particularly with complex embedded formulae. All papers are now submitted electronically, reviewed via email, corrected by corresponding by email with the

authors and then sending pdf files to the printer in Christchurch via Deputy Editor Bruce Deam. Many papers are now submitted in the correct Bulletin format, using a template found on the NZSEE website, so allowing the editor more time to proof read and get the figures in their correct position and check they are legible.

Since the 2010-11 Christchurch earthquakes, everyone it seems, involved with the NZ seismic scene is too busy to write technical journal papers, except of course for our Annual Conferences. Some of those conference papers would make excellent Bulletin papers with a bit of work, but once presented these efforts are put aside because some new research or design, or even another local earthquake has taken over the time. This is a pity as much of the detail never sees the light of day, except that sometimes the academic research is published in a world renowned international journal.

In an attempt to make the Bulletin a world renowned publication, the Management Committee has appointed about 20 eminent researchers and practitioners to the new Editorial Board. It is hoped that these Board members will be able to persuade their colleagues and associates to submit excellent papers for review and subsequent publication. Papers will be reviewed by at least 2 peer reviewers before the decision is made to publish or reject the manuscript. Reviews also have not been easy to obtain in the last few years. Reviewing technical papers is an unpaid, onerous task, which is often left till the last minute when the editor is prompting the reviewer regularly. The aim is to have at least 50 papers a year submitted, this being about a 3-fold increase on the current rate. I can't see it happening myself, but I will be pleased to be proven wrong. Perhaps NZ is just too small to compete with the much larger international earthquake related journals.

Back in the 1980s the Earthquake Commission sponsorship for the Bulletin was \$30,000 annually, a figure which hasn't much changed since. It used to cover all the publishing costs, postage and the Editor's honorarium. Today it barely covers half of those costs. I can see that to become a world class publication will need a major increase in resources and that may mean increased subscriptions and allowing the insertion of advertising. Personally I would like to see the use of more colour in the hard copy but colour printing is still very expensive compared with black and white.

The new Editor-in-Chief is Professor Rajesh Dhakal of The University of Canterbury and I wish him well with this interesting, worthwhile and demanding task.

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