

Australian Journal of Chemistry Celebrates its Sixtieth Anniversary

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You are looking at the first issue of the sixtieth volume of the *Australian Journal of Chemistry*. The journal has changed enormously over the last sixty years but some crucial elements remain. *AJC*, as the journal is affectionately known, continues to be a major forum for the publication of some of the country's and the region's best chemical science. Since *AJC* has a fine tradition of publishing papers on all aspects of chemistry, it also remains an important vehicle by which all researchers can promulgate their research to colleagues outside their own specific area(s) of the discipline. A survey of the authorship over the last six decades reveals the names of some of our most distinguished chemists, including Birch and Cornforth, while a glance at more recent issues of the journal provides the names of many rising stars in chemistry, especially those on the local scene. Although the journal has had an Australasian-focus in the past, the current editorial direction, with an emphasis on ensuring proper coverage of a range of internationally recognized research priorities, means that this is less so now. As a consequence, and as evidenced by looking at the most highly cited papers published in *AJC* during 2004,^[1–3] 2005,^[4–6] and 2006,^[7–9] the work produced by Australasian authors is receiving greater attention, while increasing numbers of papers arising from groups working in the Northern Hemisphere are now appearing in the journal.

There is a basket of indicators that highlight the vigorous nature of *AJC* as a sixty year old. The impact factor is increasing steadily, as is the journal's citation ranking. The web-based delivery of the journal has seen an almost exponential growth in the number of articles downloaded and thus confirming the continued enthusiasm for the journal within the research community. Equally importantly, submissions to the journal continue to increase while the introduction of Research Fronts has provided a remarkably popular forum for the publication of cutting-edge

science. The contributions of so many high profile international authors to such issues serve to emphasise the global 'connectedness' of both the Australasian chemical community and *AJC*.

It is worth reflecting a little on the path the journal has travelled in reaching its present and distinctly healthy form. The first five volumes of the *AJC*, covering the period 1948–1952, were issued as the *Australian Journal of Scientific Research, Series A; Physical Sciences*. However, the rapid expansion of the discipline of chemistry in Australia in the early post-war years prompted the publication of the first 'stand alone' issue of the *Australian Journal of Chemistry* in 1953 and at which time the Editor was N. S. Noble who also chaired an editorial board comprising N. S. Bayliss, R. J. Le Fevre, E. J. Hartung, and I. W. Wark. The first few issues in that year incorporated an intriguing mix of articles that focussed on natural products chemistry and the fundamental physical and/or spectroscopic properties of a range of single compounds or mixtures. In 1960 Nobel remained as Editor while Hartung had left and G. M. Badger and A. N. Hambly had joined what was now called an Advisory Committee. Interestingly, by this time a significant number of the articles appearing in the journal were concerned with chemical reactivity and synthesis although the earlier topics remained conspicuous. By 1970 A. E. Scott was serving as Editor-in-Chief while the Advisory Committee comprised Professors A. L. J. Beckwith, B. N. Figgis, R. W. Green, E. Ritchie, I. G. Ross, and D. R. Stranks. Synthetic and natural products chemistry seemed to be the most common topics covered by the papers published around this time. By 1973 B. J. Walby was Editor-in-Chief of the journal and he remained in place in 1980 and at which time the Advisory Committee comprised (in addition to Walby) A. R. H. Cole, D. W. Cameron, R. M. Golding, J. R. Hall, N. V. Riggs, and A. M. Sargeson.



Martin Banwell was born and educated in New Zealand. He is a graduate of the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand (1979) and then spent a postdoctoral period with Leo Paquette (Ohio State University). He held academic appointments at the Universities of Auckland (1982–1986) and Melbourne (1986–1995) before moving to the Australian National University (1995–). His research interests are in the area of synthetic organic chemistry, particularly the development of new methodologies and their application to the total synthesis of biologically active natural products. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, the Royal Society of New Zealand, and the Australian Academy of Science as well as a recipient of the Birch Medal and the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK) Synthetic Organic Chemistry Award. Martin Banwell is on the Editorial Advisory Boards of various journals including *Chemistry – An Asian Journal*, *Synlett*, *Tetrahedron*, and *Tetrahedron Letters*, and is the Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee of the *Australian Journal of Chemistry*.

At this point the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI), the professional organization for chemists in Australia, also had A. V. Robertson as a representative on the committee. Furthermore, inorganic chemistry papers were becoming much more evident amongst the mix being published by the journal at that time. 1981 saw a dramatic change in editorial arrangements, with R. Schoenfeld, R. J. Leydon, and J. R. Zdysiewicz all acting in this role. Schoenfeld retired in August 1985 after making many remarkable contributions to the journal as well as to the matter of the publication of chemical research more generally. In 1990 Zdysiewicz was Managing Editor with C. S. Greenwood assisting while the Advisory Committee was chaired by D. W. Cameron and included M. A. Bennett, R. C. Cambie, G. B. Deacon, K. P. Ghiggino, F. P. Larkins, D. D. Ridley, E. Rizzardo, D. Seddon, and T. H. Spurling (as RACI representative). The range of papers published in 1990 reflected the remarkable diversity of chemical research being undertaken in Australia although organic chemistry was now quite clearly the dominant theme. Early contributions to the 'emerging' topic of biological chemistry were also becoming evident. 1996 saw a major change in the format of the journal with the conversion from an A5 into an A4 configuration and, simultaneously, the introduction of graphical abstracts. These arrangements gave *AJC* a very modern feel. 2000 saw Zdysiewicz continue as Managing Editor while L. Lindoy was now serving as Chair of the Advisory Committee with the other members being M. Gill, G. A. Lawrance, W. D. Lawrance, A. W.-H. Mau, L. Radom, P. J. Steel, C. R. Strauss (as RACI representative), K. G. Watson, and myself. Organic chemistry remained the major sub-discipline represented amongst the papers published at this time. However, shortly after the current Editor assumed her position, in 2001, a considerable effort was devoted to encouraging submissions in more developing areas such as materials science, ionic liquids (see the Research Front in this issue), molecular machines, and radical polymerization. This conscious diversification of content has had a considerable impact and allows *AJC* to retain its claim as a publisher of research covering all aspects of chemistry. A further recent and major event has been the spinning off, from *AJC*, of what one might describe as a daughter journal, *Environmental Chemistry*. Because she comes from such good genetic stock, the daughter is thriving.

So, *AJC* has a tremendous heritage that we feel proud of and would want to honour through the maintenance of the standards set some sixty years ago and sustained in the interim. I sincerely hope that sixty years hence, in 2067, a similarly healthy prognosis can be given for the journal. Certainly, the current trajectory seems right, especially with the introduction of XML publishing, 'click-of-a-mouse' cross-referencing in more recent issues, and the establishment of a fully accessible, electronic version of the journal that goes back to the very first issue published sixty years ago. The ensuing higher profile of *AJC* means that it is now a significant member of the international 'club' of chemistry publications. With the continued vigorous support of our authors and readers, we are confident the stature of the journal will continue to grow as rapidly as it has over the last five years or so. A sustained editorial emphasis on the publication of papers reporting high quality work, especially at the cutting-edge of the discipline, should help to ensure this will be so.

I thank you, the reader, for all your support and wish you continued happy browsing not only of the present issue but also of the many more to come in future years. Of course, I must also thank all of our authors and referees. However, no commentary of this type would be complete without acknowledging the truly spectacular efforts of the current editorial team headed by Alison Green and including both Jenny Bennett, who serves as Deputy Managing Editor, and Richard Hecker, the Production Editor. Of course, these three central figures enjoy the benefits of being embedded within the vital and vibrant **CSIRO PUBLISHING** where they have colleagues involved in producing the other members of the 'original' stable of Australian Journals of Scientific Research (AJSRs) as well as newer and equally successful productions, including *Environmental Chemistry*. The long-standing association of the AJSRs, including *AJC*, with the Australian Academy of Science has also been a major source of support while the more recent affiliation of *AJC* with the RACI has brought further benefits including a capacity to reach the broad membership of this organization.

I wish you all a very successful and productive 2007.

Martin Banwell

Chair, *Australian Journal of Chemistry*

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