

The 25th anniversary of *Materials Letters*

The first issue of *Materials Letters* was published in June 1982, and so this issue represents completion of the first quarter of a century in the journal's history. As the only member of the current editorial staff who has been in place for all of that time, it falls to me to write an Editorial to mark the occasion.

Materials Letters was the brainchild of Frank Wang, then at State University of New York at Stony Brook. He had noticed in 1981 that there was no journal, at that stage, devoted solely to the publication of letters in the burgeoning field of Materials, like *Applied Physics Letters* in the applied physics field, and felt that it was time to fill this gap. Together with Jack Wernick at Bell Labs, Murray Hill, he convinced Elsevier, through the North-Holland Publishing Company, of the viability of this idea, and gathered a group of like-minded scientists to form the Editorial and Associate Editorial Board. Jack Wernick was his fellow Principal Editor, and P.J. Herley, also at Stony Brook, was his Deputy Principal Editor. While on sabbatical at Southampton University, Frank convinced me to join as Corresponding Editor, along with Bernd Hoffmann at Univ of Karlsruhe, and T. Ninomiya at Univ of Tokyo.

As a new materials journal, *Materials Letters* was able to embrace all aspects of the science, application and processing of materials of all kinds. The first issue included 4 papers on semiconductors, one on metallic glasses, one on intermetallics, two on electroceramics, and one on thin films. The aim of the journal was 'to reach and provide a forum for scientists and engineers trained in the traditional disciplines of chemistry, physics, ceramics and metallurgy, now engaged in the interdisciplinary field of the science and technology of materials'. The journal was thus envisaged as being inclusive of all materials sub-disciplines, and this interdisciplinary approach marked an acknowledgement of work which, until that time, would not find a place in single subject materials science journals with a background in metallurgy, ceramics or polymers. In my view, this has represented an important contribution that the journal has made to our discipline, right up to the present day.

On the retirement of Frank Wang as Principal Editor in April 1989, Jack Wernick continued to lead the journal in his place. By that stage, the publisher's note in that issue recorded that submissions to the journal had 'shown a healthy increase' and publication was now on a monthly schedule. The following year (1990), I joined Jack as fellow Principal Editor. With the continued growth of the journal, Hideo Nakajima, from Osaka University, joined us as a third Principal Editor in 2002, giving representation from US, Europe and Japan in the Editorial team. In September 2002 Jack recorded the 20th Anniversary of the

journal, and noted, among other comments, that 'China is the country sending most of the manuscripts, with India running a close second'. He also mentioned the interesting fact that Frank Wang was at Bell Labs, Allentown when the journal began, and that was one of the links between them.

After Jack Wernick's retirement in 2003, myself and Hideo Nakajima remained as Principal Editors, until Gary Messing from Penn State University, and Heng Qiang Ye from Institute of Metal Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, joined us as Principal Editors in 2004. Later Lasar Shvindlerman from the Institut für Metallkunde und Metallphysik, Aachen made the move from Corresponding Editor to be a fifth member of the Editorial team. He is the third Editor to have made that transition! It has been a great pleasure for me to work with such a distinguished team of international scientists, all of whom have made invaluable contributions to the journal.

The growth of the number of papers submitted to the journal has been exponential in recent years! The first issue of the journal published just 50 papers, while in the year 2005, 873 papers were published! To accommodate this, in parallel with the enhancement of the Editorial team, we were fortunate that Elsevier phased in online submission and editorial management, which has enabled us to handle the enormous volume of papers. *Materials Letters* has now grown to be one of the largest materials journals, and, in recent years, the only materials journal devoted solely to the publication of letters — a vindication, in my view, of Frank Wang's original vision! In parallel with this, the Editors have determined to publish papers of only the highest quality, and most significant in impact, with the result that the Impact Factor has risen consistently to its present level at 1.299 — no mean achievement for a letters journal!

In all of these developments over the years, I pay tribute to the continual support by Elsevier, whose staff have made such important contributions to the journal, and to all my fellow Editors, their assistants, Associate Editors, referees, and authors. This silver-covered issue is a celebration of the achievement of 25 years, and, to record this event we publish in full a few of the most highly-cited papers, with both immediate and long-term impact, over the period of the journal since 1985, including the first Editorial by Frank Wang in 1982. We also publish a longer list of titles of papers which were cited most frequently over that period. We celebrate the achievement of a quarter of a century of publication, and look forward to the next 25 years!!

Arthur Willoughby
Editor