

Editorial

The old order changeth, yielding place to new (Tennyson 1809–92)

As it is with nature so it must be with VCOT

The below photograph is of the first meeting of the Editorial Board of Veterinary and Comparative Orthopaedics and Traumatology in February 1987. The first edition of VCOT appeared in early 1998. Dr. W. Dieter Prieur conceived the idea and title for the journal and persuaded me to join him in approaching the late Prof. Dr. Paul Matis – the then Publisher at Schattauer. Prof. Matis liked the idea and I found myself with a new position. However, after 21 years as Editor-in-Chief, I shall resign on 30th June, 2008, and I am delighted to be able to inform readers that Prof. Kenneth Johnson has agreed to become Editor-in Chief (Designate) and will take over the full position on 1st July, 2008.

Over the years, VCOT has gone from strength to strength. In the first year, the journal published 24 papers from five different countries. That figure has grown so that in the last four editions VCOT has published 68 articles from 19 different coun-

tries. At the same time the journal now attracts the regular support of five to seven advertisers. In 2006 and 2007, 101 and 112 manuscripts, respectively, were submitted electronically to Manuscript Central, the online peer-review system. In the same two years, 41 and 62 manuscripts were published, respectively. But this still leaves a long list of manuscripts that have already been accepted and are waiting to be published. Over the last two years the Editorial Board has studied, in detail, the problem and all of its ramifications. I am pleased to be able to report that starting in 2009, VCOT will appear six times a year. This introduction should have a decided positive effect upon shortening the waiting time between acceptance and the appearance in print of authors' works. Already some pressure has been taken off authors by the advent of *VCOT First*, where articles are prepublished online (www.vcot-online.com) up to six months ahead of the print version.



Prof. Geoff.
Sumner-Smith



The inaugurate VCOT editorial board meeting in 1987. (l to r) D. Bergemann (Schattauer Publishers); G. Sumner-Smith; P. Matis (founding publisher), and W.-D. Prieur, to whom we owe the conception of the Journal.

The growth of the journal over the last 20 years has been due to the efforts of many people and groups and I would be very remiss if I did not extend my personal thanks.

My first thanks go to the members of the Consultant Editorial Board (CEB). When occasion warrants it, these individuals, representing different countries and institutes, are called upon by the Editor-in-Chief to contribute their advice regarding past and future policies as to what should or should not be published and the directions that the Editor-in-Chief should take. For example, last year the question as to whether pure science manuscripts should be considered for publication was put to the Board. The unanimous advice given was that VCOT should publish such manuscripts after acceptance by appropriate reviewers, 'provided the material was relevant to orthopaedics or traumatology, and that not more than one of such ilk should appear in an individual journal'. The members of the CEB also act as reviewers of manuscripts within their own field of expertise.

A strong board of reviewers (BOR) is the cornerstone of any journal. VCOT has been extraordinarily fortunate in the diligence and competence of its reviewers, who have worked for the Board. Over the years it has been necessary to expand as more and more sub-specialities offered manuscripts. Some referees have resigned, citing time constraints, and others have quickly taken their place. The majority decision of three referees has proved to be very helpful and fair to all authors. However, some individual case reports have been handled by one reviewer, an expert in the subject, who may or may not have advised me to seek an adjunct opinion.

Taking all manuscripts into consideration one can say that it is very rare to have a manuscript accepted 'as is', in other words as it was submitted. Even those very rare ones are subjected to editing by the Editor at Schattauer, as well as the Editor-in-Chief.

Over the years we have been exceedingly fortunate with the staff at Schattauer that have been at the disposal of the journal. Many work behind the scenes in compositing, photography, binding, and those at Mayr Miesbach, Germany, who are involved with the printing and dispatch of the finished product.

Over the years, VCOT has seen an increasing number of instrument suppliers who now regularly advertise in the Journal. At that time, Dr. Andrea Schurg was Managing Editor for the journal; over the years she carefully directed me in matters of publishing. Later she became Managing Director of Journals. Dr. Schurg was followed in 2006 by Ms. Amanda Godsell as Managing Editor, a lady who is a graduate in German and English of The University of York, UK. I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have these two ladies, as well as their predecessors, at the other end of the telephone or e-mail, to make me keep my eye on the minutiae of publishing and also upon the calendar; the latter an item being a subject that is never out of the mind of an editor.

Without you, the reader and authors of papers of this journal, VCOT would have mouldered away. Your support has been superb and very much appreciated.

'In science, read by preference the newest work; in literature, the oldest'.
(Bulwer-Lytton 1803–73)

Though my 'Horn of Plenty' has brimmed over with help that I have received from all quarters, there is one person to whom I am deeply indebted for whatever acceptance VCOT has in the comparative orthopaedic world – and that is Mr. Dieter Bergemann, the successor to the late Professor Paul Matis as Publisher of VCOT. Dieter Bergemann gave the journal, and me, the space and time to develop ideas and attract good manuscripts. In the early days, when manuscripts and the circulation of the journal were in stages of infancy, he had faith, he believed in the journal and considered it to be a good example of what he wanted his Publishing House to produce. As the journal began to prosper he declined offers to sell VCOT to other companies

To Dieter Bergemann as a publisher, and my friend, I offer my sincere gratitude for his support to me, and to all authors, reviewers, editors and all others who work on VCOT.

To my successor on taking over the obstetrics of delivering not four, but six editions of VCOT each year, I give him my warmest blessing. He will have some 'hair tearing experiences', but nevertheless, a very warm and rewarding feeling on each occasion that a new edition of our journal appears in his mailbox.



G. Sumner-Smith, Guelph
Editor-in-Chief