

Editorial

JON AGAR (Editor), JOE CAIN (Associate Editor) AND
HASOK CHANG (Associate Editor)

The September 2009 issue of the *British Journal for the History of Science* is the first under a new editorial regime. We would like to take the opportunity to praise the work of our predecessor, Simon Schaffer, and to introduce ourselves and our plans.

Simon was editor for five years, the standard stint. I am sure readers will agree that the quality of the *Journal* has been more than sustained. Under his guidance the *Journal* has continued to be an outlet for the best scholarship in history of science. The subject matter of the articles and the backgrounds and ages of the authors have properly reflected the diversity in which the field of history of science has thrived. Furthermore, Simon has, where necessary, used the voice of the *Journal* to protect our subject's interests. We are thinking here, in particular, of the spirited campaign co-ordinated against the proposed European Reference Index for the Humanities, an ill-conceived plan to rank journals. The fact that the *BJHS* would have received the highest ranking was of no consideration against the principle that the Index would be divisive, unfair and debilitating. We support the stand.

We know Simon will agree that he has had dedicated and talented support. We are very glad that the editorial board have agreed to continue to guide the new team, and we thank them for past work. We will also benefit from the continued assistance of Mrs Trish Hatton, whose sterling work may be unrecognised by readers but is fully appreciated by authors and editors. Finally, Simon has had a reviews editor who has raised the process to an art form. Greg Radick will be stepping down in February 2010 at the end of his five years. We thank him too.

But who are we? Jon Agar is a historian of recent science and technology. He has two associate editors. Joe Cain is a historian of the life sciences, recovering at the moment from a busy Darwin year. Hasok Chang is a philosopher and historian, primarily of chemistry and physics. We have all served the British Society for the History of Science as council members as well as in other capacities. Joe is currently editor of *BSSH Monographs*. We are all at the Department of Science and Technology Studies at University College London. History and philosophy of science has been taught at UCL since the department was set up in the early 1920s. We also now investigate the contemporary politics and representations of science. We feel it is a good, temporary home for the *Journal*.

And what of our plans? Certainly we intend to keep up the high standards set by our predecessors. But we want to make changes too, some small and some larger. On a small scale, potential new authors should note the tweak in citation format: full names

and publishers will now be included, as they provide useful information. More importantly, we will aspire to publish articles that have relevance to large sections of the community, even if they are on specialist topics. A good balance of solid concrete substance and explicit historiographical awareness is what we are looking for. We like big arguments backed up by evidence. Where we think there are topics that are not receiving the right attention we will say so. (We may have prize competitions.) Finally, we insist that the *Journal* is completely open to authors and topics from around the world. It may be the *British Journal for the History of Science* – perhaps that’s a good new title in italics? – but there’s no special preference for people and things British.