

A Message from the Editor

I would like to report some changes to the editorial board of *The Aeronautical Journal*. Also I would like to use the opportunity to report briefly on the present status of the *Journal* and to describe the objectives for the coming 12 months.

After many successful years as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal*, Professor John Stollery decided it was time for him to step down. He has been tireless in his efforts to maintain the *Journal* as an important medium for publishing papers on research in aerospace and closely related technological fields. This has been at a time when publishing possibilities have increased with the introduction of new journals but, over the past three years, the number of papers submitted for possible publication in *The Aeronautical Journal* has more than doubled. Some of his initiatives included more regular invited survey papers on crucial topics in aerospace and the championing of a number of important special issues. The special issue that stands out above all others is the one to mark 100 years of powered flight. This was not preoccupied with just past glories but offered a forward look to the next 50 years of aerospace. For more immediate impact we should turn to the special issues dedicated to the 'Greener by Design' initiative.

I have accepted the extremely difficult task of following John as Editor-in-Chief and Professor Mike Graham has taken over the role of chairman of the board of associate editors. However, we are well aware that the future success of the *Journal* does not depend on just us but also on the members of the board of associate editors and the dedicated publications staff at the Royal Aeronautical Society.

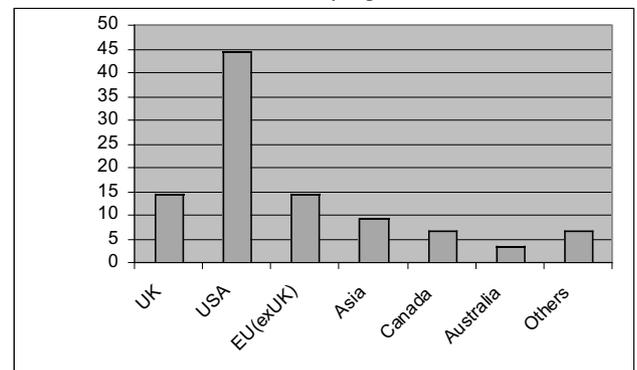
Now let me turn to the *Journal* itself. I have already mentioned the very encouraging increase in paper submissions but who are our readers? Subscribers can be broken down into Royal Aeronautical Society members and non-members. I will concentrate on the non-members because this provides by far the majority of our readers. These non-member subscribers break down as follows:

Aerospace Companies	8.6%
Govt/Military/Research Institutes	17.4%
Public Libraries	6.9%
Universities	47.8%
Unknown (Subscription agencies)	19.3%

The nearly 20% distributed through subscription agencies are thought to go primarily to research-based organisations.

It is clear from the figures above that universities are the main subscribers, so how do they break down by region?

Universities by Region



So while published in the UK, *The Aeronautical Journal* has wide global readership.

An important measure these days of a *Journal's* status is its 'impact factor'. This is a measurement related to the frequency with which articles in a journal have been cited. For a particular year it is the number of citations worldwide to articles published in the previous two years divided by the total number of articles published in these two years. The impact factor is useful for determining the relative standing of journals in a particular field but is less reliable when working across disciplines. Between 2004 and 2005 the impact factor for *The Aeronautical Journal* increased by more than a third and we hope for a similar improvement for 2006. Increasing the number of papers submitted provides the opportunity for improving the quality of those published which in turn should increase the impact factor, thus completing a virtuous circle.

Where the *Journal* has lagged behind is in its electronic accessibility. Presently non-member subscribers, who represent the major of the readership, cannot access the *Journal* from their desktops. Recently the Royal Aeronautical Society has upgraded its web software, making electronic access to the *Journal* possible and it is now a top priority for the web team. I hope that we will be able to announce very shortly that all subscribers can access the *Journal* via their computers.

So now to our objectives:

- Increase further the number of good quality papers submitted
- Increase further the impact factor
- Improve accessibility by making electronic access more widely available
- Recruit more non-UK associate editors to reflect the international standing of the *Journal*.

Professor Peter Bearman
Editor-in-Chief