

## **Editorial Announcement**

### **The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology**

There will shortly be a change to the way in which *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* is published. For the first 33 years of its life (beginning in 1948), QJEP was published as a single volume, with four issues per year. In 1981, the journal was split into two sections: *Section A Human Experimental Psychology*, and *Section B Comparative and Physiological Psychology*. From January 2006, the two sections will merge together, again forming a single journal.

The motives for this reconciliation reflect the changing concerns of experimental psychologists over the past 25 years. A bipartite division of the subject, which served the interests of authors and readers well in the 1980s, is not necessarily as useful today. With this in mind, the Experimental Psychology Society has decided that it is time to eliminate a split that has become rather artificial. In fact, there has already been some significant blurring of the topics covered in the two sections; Section B regularly contains human experimental work, while Section A has published several important physiological studies as the use of neuroscientific methods continues to expand in all areas of psychological research.

In bringing together the two sections of the journal, we are particularly anxious to retain (and, we hope, to extend) the range of material published in the journal as a whole, and to bring relevant articles to as broad an audience as possible. Each issue of the new format will contain a mixture of material previously published in sections A and B. We hope that authors will appreciate the increase in exposure of their articles, and that the readership will benefit from the added diversity of topics in each issue.

The new, single section journal will retain the *Quarterly* title, but will be published Monthly – a mild eccentricity which we hope readers will forgive on the grounds that we now receive enough high quality submissions to warrant this frequency. In recent years, section A has been published in eight issues per annum, and section B in four, so subscribers to both sections will continue to receive twelve issues per year. New editorial boards are already in place, and have been dealing with submissions since January 2005, under the editors-elect for each section. These will now merge into a single large editorial board chosen to cover the full range of material we intend to publish (i.e., at least the union of the current Sections A and B). The two incoming editors (Mike Burton and Simon Killcross) will be joint editors of the new format for the duration of their editorial terms. Reflecting this merging of editorial process, all submissions may be made through a central editorial office (currently housed in the Department of Psychology, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ, UK). Our preferred submission route is to receive manuscripts in electronic format (PDF) to [qjep@psy.gla.ac.uk](mailto:qjep@psy.gla.ac.uk).

We plan to take advantage of the change in format to introduce a number of other innovations. The most significant is the introduction of a new category of Short Articles. The intention is to allow authors to disseminate new findings quickly, and at a relatively early stage in a research programme. Articles under 4000 words in length (including abstract), and with a limit of 20 references, will be eligible for fast review, and fast-track publication. The *quid pro quo* will be that reviews will be light-touch, and little feedback will be given to rejected manuscripts. “Light-touch” here refers to the fact that reviewers will be asked to make categorical accept or reject decisions for manuscripts. Of course,

the standard of the articles will have to be at least as high as those accepted through the normal route. Although we believe that the new category of Short Article will be attractive both to authors and to readers, we remain committed to the publication of longer articles, describing more complete programmes of research. Hence, QJEP will continue to be a home for multi-experiment papers, through which authors can make significant theoretical advances. We will also maintain two further features that have appeared in the current Sections A and B: scholarly review articles on focused topics, and occasional special issues devoted entirely to selected research areas. Ideas for either of these features are always welcome. Furthermore, we hope that the length of time taken for careful and thorough review of submitted articles will be offset by the PrEview service, which gives readers access to all articles in press as soon as possible after acceptance; as ever we will strive to keep publication lags to a minimum. To accommodate these changes we will not be publishing book reviews in future issues.

QJEP has always been a general journal, covering a wide range of topics. Submissions in all areas of experimental psychology will continue to be welcome, and our definition of “experimental” will continue to be broad. We expect to publish articles that employ traditional experimental methods, as well as studies using, for example, the latest neuroimaging techniques or computer simulation. The scope of the journal is defined by the psychology it covers, rather than the methodologies used. We would, however, make one observation. One reason for publishing research findings in a more general journal, rather than one of the many specialist journals that now exist, is that the likely readership is so much larger, extending the potential impact of articles. However, to take full advantage of this, one must consider the impact of a *title* on the disinterested reader. We would urge authors to make their titles accessible to the non-specialist: not clichéd or punning, but informative beyond the small group of peers who would read the article wherever it was published.

Journals cannot survive without authors. As incoming editors we aspire to make QJEP more and more attractive for authors. Authoritative and punctual reviewing contributes to this aim, as does the PrEview system, and (we intend) the new short-report facility. We hope that we can also be reactive, and so we issue an invitation to authors: please take part in the development of the journal by contributing suggestions and comments on its performance. The incoming editorial board is diverse and enthusiastic, and certainly open to new suggestions. Finally, we should also comment that our reviewers allow us to maintain the high standards of the journal. In an age of competing demands, we are extremely grateful to those who continue to perform this time-consuming duty.

MIKE BURTON and SIMON KILLCROSS  
Editors-Elect