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Editorial

Changes and challenges

Two changes in the format of the *Proceedings* can be seen in this volume. As announced in volume 113, the journal is now produced by offset litho so that half-tones can appear on the page, integrated with the text, rather than being gathered, less informatively, at the back of the volume.

The second innovation can be found on the back end board, where four microfiche are mounted. These represent the first attempts to implement the Society's new policy for publication. Although the main aim of using microfiche is to enable a system of two-level reports, principally of excavations, to be introduced, this transitional period has already produced a variety of approaches to the use of microfiche. The microfiche in this volume contain three types of material.

1. Specialist reports whose conclusions have been adequately summarized and discussed in the printed text: ie the anatomical reports from Burl's *Boghead* report, the flint catalogue from Stevenson's *Cùl a'Bhaile* report, and various appendices from Yeoman's *Castlehill of Strachan* report.
2. Material of an extremely detailed and/or specialist nature which would not normally have been published in print: ie the extensive flaked stone catalogue and mammal bone measurements from Sharples's *Pierowall* report, the exhaustive pollen details from Barber and Brown's *An Sithean* report, the very full anatomical account from Clarke *et al's Boatbridge Quarry* note and the anatomical results and extended pottery discussion from Shepherd *et al's Mains of Balnagowan* note.
3. A full report, being the full account of an excavation as envisaged in the *Guidelines for the preparation of two-level reports* published in *Proceedings*, 113 (1983), viii-ix: ie H K Murray's *Gallowgate* report.

The Publications Committee invites comments from readers on these different approaches, given that the *Gallowgate* report is the only one that can be genuinely described as two-level within the definition already promulgated. It is also the only report to show a real reduction in the length of the printed text and a consequent increase in readability.

In preparing the summary sections of two-level reports authors are challenged to abandon the traditional hypothetico-deductive structure of current excavation reports which often buries exciting conclusions at the end, whither the average Fellow or the specialist in a different period are unlikely to persevere. Instead, excavators are invited to try to communicate some of the intellectual excitement which sustained them throughout the excavation and writing-up by presenting concise but lively statements of their results and interpretations for print, and as detailed and fully argued accounts as are necessary for microfiche.

Ian A G Shepherd
Aberdeen, April 1985