

Celebrating 20 years of Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter—in honour of Richard Palmer

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PREFACE

Celebrating 20 years of *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*—in honour of Richard Palmer

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This year marks the 20th anniversary of the launch of *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* in 1989. The journal was formed from the merger of *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics* and *Journal of Physics F: Metal Physics* which had separated in 1971. In the 20 years since its launch, *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* has more than doubled in size, while raising standards. Indeed, *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* has become one of the leading scientific journals for our field. This could not have occurred without great leadership at the top. No one has been more responsible for this growth in both size and quality than our Senior Publisher, Richard Palmer.

Richard first started work at IOP in March 1971 as an Editorial Assistant with *J. Phys. B*. After a few months, he transferred to *J. Phys. C*. The following year, the Assistant Editor of *J. Phys. C*, Malcolm Haines, left suddenly in order to work on his family vineyard in France, and Richard stepped into the breach. In those days, external editors had a much more hands-on role in IOP Publishing and he had to travel to Harwell to be interviewed by Alan Lidiard, the Honorary Editor of *J. Phys. C*, before being given the job of Assistant Editor permanently. Since *J. Phys. C* and *J. Phys. F* re-merged to form *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*, Richard gradually shed his other journal responsibilities, except for *Reports on Progress in Physics*, to build up *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*. He has worked closely with four Editors-in-Chief of *J. Phys. C* and five of *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*.

When Richard announced his retirement this past winter, we met it with a great deal of both happiness and sadness. Of course, we are happy that he is going to be allowed to enjoy his retirement, but we remain very sad to lose such a valuable member of our team, especially the one who had provided the heart and soul of the journal over its 20 years. We will be able to rely upon the team which Richard ably trained as we go into the future. The Executive Board decided to do this special issue, both to commemorate the 20th year of *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* and to honour Richard for his long years of service to IOP Publishing and *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*. This issue is dedicated to Richard for his many years of work and friendship with the journal board that has seen a great many changes over the years.

This issue covers a very wide range of topics, since we approached all current and past members of the various boards of *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* in seeking papers for this special issue. The response has been very positive and this will be one of our larger special issues. The desire to honour Richard is widespread among these various boards, so that we have been almost overwhelmed with submissions, although many who wished to contribute could not because of other obligations. We hope that you, the readership, will enjoy these articles.