



## Editorial Desk

G. K. Ananthasuresh\*

Centennial celebrations are happy occasions and are certainly moments for reflection on the significance of an event. They answer the question of why something or someone is remembered even after 100 years.

With this issue, the *Journal of IISc* enters its 100th volume. The theme of this issue is Hydrogen Bond, which is also 100 years old. This coincidence was noticed by a member of the current editorial board, E. Arunan, who is also the guest editor of this issue. The coincidence goes further. Even though the Journal is issuing its 100th volume in 2020, its first volume was published in 1914. Equally interestingly, Patrick Goymer wrote an article “100 years of the hydrogen bond” in 2012 (*Nature Chemistry*, volume 4, pp. 863–864). So, we have two centenaries that are being celebrated after a few years more than 100, for different reasons. The erudite articles in this issue shed light on the historical trail of the discovery of the hydrogen bond and its significance.

Strictly speaking, the centenary of the Journal passed in 2014. It was also celebrated with the publication of a “Special Commemorative Centenary Issue” by the IISc Press. It re-printed 43 selected papers of historical value and current relevance, from the Journal, with short commentaries on each paper written by the distinguished faculty of IISc and ably edited by T. N. Guru Row, who was the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal at that time. But then, the volume number of the Journal in 2014 was 94, not 100. Anyone with any experience in editing a journal would know the circumstances responsible for missing issues and volumes. My curiosity regarding the missing volumes took me to the website that has the digitized versions of the Journal ([www.iisc.ac.in/iiscjournal-archives](http://www.iisc.ac.in/iiscjournal-archives)) and then to the archive room at the Office of Communications in IISc.

The Journal began with the paper “*Borohydrates*” of which the founding Director of IISc, Morris Travers, was the first author. It was his leadership that led to the creation of the Journal just five years after the Institute was established. In the initial years, the Journal published papers as booklets with separate pricing. There was no volume number on them although the year and

a code was included at the end of each paper. It appears that those booklets were bound, somewhat haphazardly, into four volumes, perhaps much later. Thus, the first 9 years are now bound as four volumes with overlapping years. Thereafter, the Journal was not published in 1941, 1982, and 1985. It is indeed impressive that it has been published for 105 years missing only three years despite the many challenges it faced.

The Director was shown as the Chair of the Editorial board of the Journal for many years but members were not listed. Editorials were not written, making it challenging to piece together the history of the Journal. An analysis of the original copies of the Journal is necessary to discern the reasons underlying the checkered progression of the Journal. Fortunately, T. N. Guru Row has just written a delightful article “*The Many Avatars of the Journal of the Indian Institute of Science*” (*Connect*, December, 2019) in which he recounts the transformation of the Journal.

The Journal’s publications include not just research articles but review articles, book reviews, opinions and perspectives, re-prints from other journals, synopses of PhD theses, and more. The annual report of the Institute in 1959 mentions a *Golden Jubilee Research Volume* but it waits to be traced and digitized. There were special issues of the Journal that celebrated the centenaries of Srinivasa Ramanujan and C. V. Raman. The current version of publishing invited review articles on selected themes came about in 2007 when P. Balaram, the erstwhile Director of IISc, redefined the scope of the Journal and reconstituted the editorial board. The Journal also published two issues in 2008 with reprints of significant papers of IISc faculty in the first 50 years of Institute’s existence, on the occasion of the centenary of IISc.

We are indebted to many individuals who have nurtured the Journal for more than a century: the Directors of IISc; past editors (G. N. Ramachandran, N. Mukunda, S. Soundaranayagam, M. Vijayan, S. S. Krishnamurthy, M. S. Shaila, L. M. Patnaik, and T. N. Guru Row); members of the editorial board; librarians including T. K. S. Iyengar, N. M. Malwad, and S. Venkadesan;

\* Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, India.  
\*suresh@iisc.ac.in

A. G. Menon, T. A. Abinandanan, and Kaushal Verma, Chairs of Archives and Publications Cell, now Office of Communications; all the guest editors of thematic issues after the Journal began to publish multidisciplinary review articles; countless administrative staff members (notably, K. Srinivasa Rao, Geetha R., and Kavitha Harish); staff of our current co-publisher, *Springer Nature*; and most importantly, the authors who trusted the Journal with their work and anonymous reviewers who contributed their valuable time.

The printing of the Journal too changed hands many times. Initially printed by Diocesan Press-Vepary in Madras (now Chennai), later by Bangalore Press, Hosali Power Press-Bangalore, and others. Currently, it is printed by the co-publisher of the Journal, *Springer Nature*. The periodicity, size, the look-and-feel, formatting, and typesetting have also changed over the years. The current format is a modified version by V Publishing Solutions, Chennai, of a design done by River Valley Technologies, Trivandrum. Thus, the Journal has undergone many changes that a journal could possibly experience.

As I looked through original bound volumes, an interesting paper from the Journal “*The Perishing of Paper in Indian Libraries*” by J. J. Sudborough and M. M. Mehta (Vol. 3, pp. 119–226, 1920) attracted my attention. This 107-page-long paper recorded a detailed scientific study of the factors that contribute to the deterioration of

paper and made recommendations to prevent it. In recent years, the Office of Communications in IISc has put in much effort into preserving books and papers of historical importance. It is important to continue this with more vigour.

In closing, on behalf of the members of the current editorial board and the Institute at large, I wish the Journal many more centuries of uninterrupted existence. I cannot resist the temptation of wishing the *Hydrogen Bond* the same because some contest the very notion of a chemical bond and call it convenient fiction and a figment of imagination (*Beyond the Bond* by Philip Ball, *Nature*, 469, pp. 26–28, 2011). Interested readers may also want to read an editorial essay by P. Balaram on “*Bonds: Chemical, Hydrogen and Others*” (*Current Science*, 104(5), 10 March, 2013).

The two entities that celebrate the centennial in this issue had fortuitous convergence many decades ago: the *Journal of IISc* published a paper with the title “*Hydrogen Bond in Benzene*” authored by Nagamani Shama Rao and S. K. K. Jatkar (Vol. 25, 1943, pp. 1–42).

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