I seek to persuade more of my fellow physical scientists to publish in Proceedings A. They have good reasons for doing so. First is the non-specialist nature of the journal: this is the place to report research likely to interest people in more than one field. Second are the high standards of refereeing, and attention to detail in production—I recall my admiration when an editor called, during production of my first paper in Proceedings A, to ask whether a subscript was a zero or the letter ‘O’. Third is the honour in sharing the journal’s pages with our illustrious predecessors among chemists, engineers, pure and applied mathematicians, and physicists. Readers will recognize their scientific heroes in this partial list: H. Bethe, M. Born, both Braggs, S. Chandrasekhar, C. A. Coulson, P. A. M. Dirac, A. S. Eddington, C. F. Gauss, G. H. Hardy, O. Heaviside, W. Heisenberg, G. Herzberg, H. Jeffreys, Lord Kelvin, J. Lighthill, J. E. Littlewood, O. Lodge, G. Marconi, J. C. Maxwell, W. Pauli, L. Pauling, R. Peierls, H. Poincare, Lord Rayleigh, C. V. Raman, S. Ramanujan, O. Reynolds, Lord Rutherford, E. Schrödinger, G. G. Stokes, G. I. Taylor, E. T. Whittaker and T. Young.

Notwithstanding this distinguished past, and worldwide distribution nowadays, the journal is not as well appreciated as it deserves to be—even occasionally being regarded as a somewhat eccentric place to publish. I can only declare my own practice: over more than 35 years, I have proudly published all my best papers in Proceedings A.

I thank Trevor Stuart for his valuable work over the past three years, especially in broadening the scientific coverage of the journal and helping the Society’s staff in their continuing efforts to reduce the time between submission and publication. I aim to continue this work, and also participate actively in the Royal Society’s consideration of the publishing opportunities provided by the Internet.

M. V. Berry

Michael Berry is a Royal Society Research Professor in the Physics Department of Bristol University, where he has been for considerably longer than he has not. He explores geometrical and asymptotic aspects of the physics of waves, particularly in quantum mechanics and optics, with an emphasis on singularities, and delights in discovering down-to-earth illustrations of abstract concepts—that is, the arcane in the mundane.