

Reflections

David E. Quain 

Institute of Brewing & Distilling,
London, SE1 2ND, UK

Email: david.quain@IBD.org.uk



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I'm delighted that these notes accompany the first issue - in the 129th volume - of the new JIB published by the Institute of Brewing & Distilling. As noted previously in Reflections, all papers are 'open access' without any fees for the authors or readers! The new website - <https://jib.ibd.org.uk/index.php/jib> - is powered by PKP (Public Knowledge Project) in tandem with OJS (Open Journal Systems, used by > 30,000 journals worldwide). The front end of the workflow (from submission to rejection or acceptance) continues with ScholarOne with papers being managed to publication through OJS.

The transition to the new system has inevitably had its fair share of challenges. Although, the 'heavy lifting' is done, some fine tuning remains to be worked through. Of the upsides, having editorial control over publications and the website is a significant benefit. Further, in addition to being open access, papers in JIB will benefit from more extensive 'meta data' than in the past which will step change visibility to search engines.

Over the last five months, launching the new JIB has been a team effort. Big thanks to Steve Curtis and, especially, Dan Griffiths for masterminding the transition - via numerous 'Teams' meetings - to the OJS website and Oliver Bremner for his expertise in creating the papers as stylish pdfs with improved readability. It's been a steep learning curve but the unfamiliar is becoming increasingly familiar.

Peer review

Peer review is the key process in the evaluation, editing and improvement of papers in scientific journals. As an author of papers in JIB and elsewhere, I am acutely aware of the apprehension of my finely honed submission being critically assessed by two (or more) anonymous reviewers. It's a 'heart in the mouth' moment when the reviewers feedback arrives.

On receipt, the reviews are read at speed whilst bristling with frustration. A more considered line by line read through mitigates the initial knee jerks and reality sinks in. Invariably, the feedback is constructive and helpful, so after some reflection the manuscript is revised. Hopefully this will hit the spot with the Editor and the reviewers. Whatever, the outcome, the manuscript will be significantly improved by peer review. As authors we might not like it but my, we need it!

The reviewers who supported the Journal in 2022 are celebrated in this issue. They are selected for possible peer review as respected scientists with appropriate expertise for the submitted manuscript. The 43 reviewers who are acknowledged said 'yes' one or more times to the invitation to review a manuscript. Some of these are authors who – having benefited themselves from the peer review process – return the favour.

Submissions and publications

As detailed at length in the last Reflections (<https://doi.org/10.1002/jib.705>), both submissions of manuscripts and acceptance of papers has been dropping in recent years. Indeed, in 2022, 75 manuscripts were submitted with an acceptance rate of 16%. Whilst editorial standards are high, these high rejection rates reflect the submission of manuscripts which are outside the scope of JIB. Indeed, 28% of manuscripts were rejected without consideration of peer review. By way of demonstration, the first submission of 2023 was on the measurement of potassium in meat! Other submissions are rejected for wilfully ignoring the instructions to authors (<https://www.ibd.org.uk/resources/ibd-publications/journal-of-the-institute-of-brewing/jib-contribute/>). This rankles as one of the tick boxes on submission is 'have you read/applied the 'instructions to authors'.

As can be seen below the geography of accepted papers, changed between 2021 and 22. Despite this, papers from Germany held up whilst those from the UK dropped from six to zero! The number of submissions that were rejected from China and Brazil was disproportionately high.

Country	2021		2022	
	Accepted	Rejected	Accepted	Rejected
Argentina	2	1		
Belgium			2	1
Brazil	1	11		
China	1	36	4	29
Czech Republic	1	1		
Denmark	2	1	1	1
Finland	1	0		
France			1	2
Germany	3	2	4	1
Ghana	1	0		
Ireland	1	4		
Italy	1	0		
Japan	1	4		
Mexico	1	2		
Nigeria			1	2
Republic of Korea	1	1		
UK	6	2		
USA	2	7	1	3
Total	28 (21%)	105	14 (16%)	75

Finally, as has become the norm, there are four papers in this issue (<https://jib.ibd.org.uk/index.php/jib/issue/view/1>). Subjects include 'a continuous mashing system controlled by mean residence time', 'the role of oak wood in the mint and floral notes of whisky: identification of common terpenoids by aromatic fractionation', a review on 'advances in understanding the microbial diversity and flavour metabolism of Chinese strong flavour Baijiu' and invited provocation from Charlie Bamforth that 'prolonged maturation of beer is of unproven benefit'. The papers are from China, France, Germany and the USA.

Cheers,

David Quain,
Editor in Chief