More than four and a half years have passed since the first special issue on this subject graced these pages in January 1988. Now, as then, the editors have not attempted to provide a representative or comprehensive survey of the field, but have merely dipped into the rich fountain of activity and expertise in the United Kingdom. What is apparent from both this issue and its predecessor is the sheer diversity of the work: ranging from the latest in sensor technology to the fundamentals of lighting and from definition of new, basic standards to laser vibrometry.

The editors concentrated on papers either from the U.K. industry or from universities working on projects for industry. The reasoning behind this selection was to encourage papers from the usually more reserved industrial researchers, who do not seem to have the same propensity for publication as their academic counterparts.

The differences between this issue and the previous one are also worth noting. In 1988, only two of the papers featured fiber optic technology. In this issue, nearly half of the papers are concerned with applications of optical fibers. This shows the movement of fiber sensors during this period out of the laboratory and into the workplace. This change is also indicative of the confluence of fiber technology and other new, enabling technologies, such as the micromachining of silicon.

Other changes have also been apparent in the U.K. optical community. During this period, the U.K. Optical Engineering Advisory Panel was formed under the auspices of SPIE. This panel has organized, in conjunction with SIRA Ltd., many successful seminars that have sought to bring new developments in optical engineering to the attention of British industry.

Optical engineering still has some way to go in the United Kingdom before being fully recognized for the comprehensive discipline it has become. Several universities now have optoelectronic or optical engineering sections and departments. The research funding bodies, however, have not moved with the times, and would-be researchers in optical engineering must hunt for financial support among the subcommittees of more traditional disciplines, such as physics, electrical engineering, or mechanical engineering.

We hope that the reader will enjoy this selection of papers, and we thank the authors for their efforts. Several additional papers arrived too late for inclusion in this issue and may be published in subsequent issues of the journal. We also take this opportunity to thank the hard-working and unsung referees, without whose instructive and informed criticism the quality of work would not have been maintained.

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