

Editorial

WITH its fortieth number, *Northern Studies* closes out thirty-four years as the Journal of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies. It also passes from the committed and able custodianship of Bjarne Thorup Thomsen and Arne Kruse, who took it up in 1996 (no. 31) and 1999 (no. 34) respectively, and into that of a new team, which will strive to reach the high bar they have set for *Northern Studies* over the past decade. We feel certain that the Society will join us in paying tribute to the outgoing Editors, for all their strenuous efforts in the interests of this journal, not least in shepherding it through the difficult terrain involved in becoming a peer-reviewed periodical.

The journal's commitment to maintaining the high scholarly standards of a peer-reviewed periodical has not been without cost when the number of submissions of the necessary quality has fallen. Like many other journals, *Northern Studies* has even experienced gap years in the past. We appreciate that publication delays are as disappointing to the Society as to ourselves, and the Editors hope that, our editorial transition now completed, our ongoing efforts to attract top-quality articles will be fruitful.

Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that, for the first time since 1992 (no. 29), the most recent number of *Northern Studies* (no. 39) was not published by Stevenson Printers of Dundee. Changing publishers has brought its own challenges, as Editors and publisher strive together to ensure that the journal maintains an attractive and professional presentation. We have the happy duty of expressing, on behalf of the outgoing Editors and the Society, our best good wishes to Stevenson's, and we look forward to a long and productive relationship with Shetland Litho of Lerwick.

Such changes give this number of *Northern Studies* the feeling of a milestone, one year prior to the Society's fortieth anniversary. The advent of the annual Pálsson lecture, which we hope will become a

mainstay in future numbers of this journal, and exciting new developments in 'northern studies' at the University of Aberdeen, will, we anticipate, make important contributions to the new directions begun in this transitional phase. When Richard Oram demitted the editorship to Bjarne in 1993 (no. 30), he referred to *Northern Studies* as a 'difficult child' (a three-year gap followed). So it remains, but the Editors shall do all we can to persuade the child to behave.