

# WADER STUDY GROUP

BULLETIN No. 40

APRIL 1984

## NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR 1984

At a glance ..... you can see that *Bulletin 40* is different! After much debate your Executive Committee decided to purchase simple word-processing facilities so that camera-ready copy for the Bulletin could be prepared more quickly and efficiently. This decision was taken after much heart-searching - we do not spend your money easily! The Group's financial position is satisfactory, as indeed it should be immediately after a subscription rise, and future prospects look good. Providing inflation does not rise it seems likely that the subscription can remain steady for some time. We can therefore afford to print slightly enlarged Bulletins from time to time, and to acquire the equipment described by Mike Pienkowski elsewhere in this Bulletin.

In taking this step into "new technology" we are sure we are doing the correct thing. One of the main aims of the Bulletin is to inform

members of recent activities, whether they be "news" or new work. This sense of immediacy encourages research and international co-operation. To achieve this aim we need the shortest possible time interval between producing "copy" and printing, and we also need to publish on time! The new system will enable us to work to tighter, shorter deadlines more easily, mainly by making checking and correcting procedures easier and by using a computer-driven printer to produce copy for the printer's camera.

We also think that the *Bulletin* looks better for its facelift - we commend No. 40 to members, with a toast to "New Technology"! Raise your glasses ..... and send in your subscription!

G. H. GREEN  
Chairman

## TECHNOLOGY AND WSG BULLETIN - OR HOW WE GOT BACK ON SCHEDULE

by M.W. Pienkowski

### The story so far

I could afford to risk a title like this because, with our new production process for WSG Bulletin, I can change it if things do not work out quite as well as we hope. Members will have noticed that it has been difficult to produce issues of the Bulletin on time. There are all sorts of reasons for this, some of which are:

- (a) the desire to include very topical items;
- (b) encouraging publication of results and early feedback to participants in cooperative projects;
- (c) maintaining a reasonably high standard of content and production;
- (d) depending on an unpaid labour force at various stages of editing and circulation; and
- (e) the fact that this labour force is scattered widely throughout Britain. (At a rough calculation, even an article from an author in Britain travels about 6000 km, in 15 stages, between receipt by the editor and posting as part of the Bulletin to members!)

Anyone with much experience of computers and word-processing will realise that the situation outlined above would benefit greatly from the introduction of such technology, and the benefits are likely to increase as time passes. Three main factors have previously prevented our adoption of such techniques:

- (a) cost;
- (b) the need for a complete back-up system in case of failure: an entire Bulletin consisting of inaccessible magnetized material is of limited value should computer or printer fail;
- (c) time to develop a suitable system.

Several processes are now in train which make the use of a word-processing system more feasible. First, microcomputers for home use have become widely available, offering high computing power at low cost. Second, several WSG members in Britain have each decided that a particular microcomputer and word-processing

chip is well suited to their needs. Some of them also have obtained the same model of printer. Thus back-up facilities are available. Third, several WSG members have gained considerable experience in the use of a wide variety of word-processing programs on a range of machines, from home microcomputers to large main-frames.

### The plan

As a result of all this, Wader Study Group has decided to change its production method to take advantage of this new technology. Due to our limited resources, we are taking a risk and introducing the new system without running it in parallel with the existing one for a trial. We hope that the experience of members outlined above will allow this to work. To make the transition in production methods easier, we are carrying out the changes in stages, where this is practicable. For example, certain discrete items such as large Tables will continue to be produced by typewriter for the moment. (We should explain here that the Bulletin is prepared as camera-ready copy from which our printers prepare printing plates photographically. Incidentally to this, members may have noted that the highly appropriate name of Lake-Shore Graphics no longer appears on the cover: this firm now forms part of Minizen Ltd., but we are pleased to retain in this firm the services of Mr Reg Davis, who has helped maintain such high printing standards for some years.)

The introduction of a word-processing system has many advantages which should benefit efficient and timely production of the Bulletin:

- (a) Corrections can be made easily and neatly, without retyping whole documents.
- (b) Because of this, items can be typed at a much earlier stage in the editing procedure. Subsequent changes and reformatting can be done without needing to retype the document. As a result of this, typing can be spread more evenly in time, avoiding a concentration of this (and consequent proof-checking) around