

THE DOZENAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

INCORPORATING THE DUODECIMAL ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

This issue of the Dozenal Journal contains material prepared for publication by Donald Hammond and other articles by DSGB members. It is by way of a “catch-up” issue, bridging the years after Don Hammond’s death and today. Don died in 1993 and the publication of the Journal has been delayed by various issues which are discussed in the attached Newsletter from our Information Secretary, Arthur Whillock.

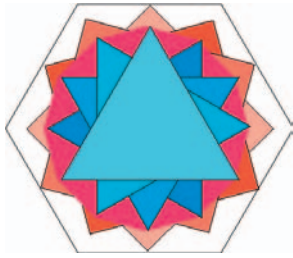
The rapid development of the Internet has changed the way we communicate with each other, and is providing a way of discussing our ideas without having to wait for a Newsletter or magazine. When the DSGB was founded we discussed the idea of a “Circulator” - a form of newsletter that would be posted from one member to the next, each adding comments. The modern equivalent of this is the Internet Forum, which provides a venue where ideas can be thrashed out and responses made. Which is fine for those of us who use modern technology but not for those who have no desire to use the Internet; they will need a printed version of any news we have to issue and we will continue to issue the Dozenal Journal in printed form as well as a web version for those with computers to download and read.

We are still looking for volunteers to help run the DSGB ... When Don Hammond died Arthur Whillock took on the task of answering enquiries and producing the magazine, but he (as are we all!) is not as young as he was. I have been mostly involved with developing the DSGB web presence but will, until such time as I can persuade someone to take over, also look after correspondence, money matters and the magazine.

This issue of the magazine is being sent out to all those who replied to my last letter asking for a printed magazine. Over the years some dozen or so members have died and of the rest who were written to about a quarter returned the reply postcard. We haven’t asked for subscriptions for some time, for obvious reasons (such as not issuing a magazine!) and will not be asking for any for the moment.

The Journal is as Arthur designed it, with a couple of small changes referring to the Internet sites which I have brought up to date.

SF, May 2006



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Website: <http://www.dozenalsociety.org.uk>

Internet discussion forum: <http://s13.invision.com/DozensOnline/index.php?>

Background to Dozenal Journal issue ϵ by the Information Secretary

Members have enquired as to the apparent lack of activity of their Society over the past seven years and asked if they had not been in receipt of the Journal due to non-payment of subscriptions. They understood when acquainted with the sad news of Donald Hammond's death in 1993. An obituary appears in this greatly delayed issue, but there are also those who also subscribe to DSA's Duodecimal Bulletin and were informed by issue no *71 in March 1993.

Assurances were given that they had not been forgotten, and that the Dozenal Principle continued to be advanced on all possible occasions. It also seemed reasonable not to ask for renewals until something tangible by way of the next Journal had been produced - and issued. As one of the old originals, who knew what was what, who and where, held the library and most of the papers, who had personal contacts with the Americans, I felt it was beholden to me to take over and complete the next Journal, (no. ϵ), that Don had started. This was in addition to my job of answering enquiries, keeping an eye on the media, technical and popular, for opportunities to make our presence known, not without success. I have not been entirely on my own, being able to call on Robert Carnaghan and Shaun Ferguson when in doubt. I am especially grateful to George Jelliss who volunteered at an early stage to word process the material being assembled and bore with commendable patience inevitable changes and corrections.

There was a naive expectation of easy rapid progress, but time flies, events intrude, and however urgent or interesting a particular investigation may be there is always something that must be done now. Even so, it should have been out in a short form early in 1995 with a newsletter to explain the problems and invite offers of help, but it was not to be dealt with so readily.

Four episodes combined to change the nature and directions of our concerns and duties.

1) Stephen Jarvis had written a book which sold well "The Bizarre Leisure Book", a collection of the ideas and aims of a wide variety of organisations from flower arranging to flying saucers. Somewhere in the middle was a description of us from Don Hammond through which we obtained not a few enquiries. I protested that our work was neither bizarre nor learned, which was agreed generally, but neither he nor his publisher could think of a better title! ,

2) Jarvis did broader interviews on related interests and ours appeared in the Sunday Telegraph of 26th November 1994. This produced a flood of enquiries, many from ex-pats in the commonwealth, many sending their subscriptions without waiting to learn more.

Work on the Journal's content came to an abrupt halt to deal with this. Most could be covered with prints of available material from our Journals or DSA's Bulletins plus copies of supporting papers we have collected. A few required specific attention and there were replies to replies generated by these.

It was clear that most were more concerned with the growing metrication threat at the time rather than a dozenal resolution of what is an age-old disparity between the requirements for measurement and mere counting. Relief was expressed in one reply that "someone was articulating the problem".

3) Early in 1995 the Department of Trade and Industry announced that from October 1st next all packaged goods were to be retailed in metric units only, as laid down in EEC Directives 80/181 and 89/617, with a fine of £5000 for non-compliance. We have been warning of an inten-

tion to displace measures that have evolved to allow meaningful contacts between their users and the objective world, including the manner in which it arranges what, in favour of a rigid artificial system with abstract numeration that can form a barrier between the two.

4) The British Weights and Measures Association was formed under Vivian Linacre as a response to the above diktat and was rewarded with an enthusiastic response. We declared our whole-hearted support for this development.

The objective was to retain our long-established convenient measures for ordinary everyday use and a rejection of these being compulsorily subjected to overall metrication with its artificial units. We had been assured by previous Governments that this was not the intention. Indeed, the legislation of 1895 defined Imperial and metric measures as being equally valid; which act has not been repealed.

BWMA has a policy that many can relate to - the retention of existing measures for ordinary everyday needs as they are without any amendment. Several of our new members became active in this development, and enquiries with a predominantly anti-metric stance were directed to it.

The survival of our ergonomic measures is very important. Were we to lose them it will be all the more difficult to discuss the principles of human orientated units that conform to our physical requirements and perceptions also the primary fractions - halves, thirds and quarters in which we instinctively make judgements of relationships and values. No-one refers to 0.50, 0.333..., 0.250 for this purpose!. Our measures have evolved since the dawn of history and beyond to fulfil our needs and allow an understanding of the material environment. Since they are known and used world-wide, even taken to the Moon and Mars courtesy of the United States, the description Imperial does seem a bit condescending to others who have had their version suppressed leaving us and the Americans sole guardians of measures embodying the principle of comprehension and divisibility.

With my study of historic measures, and the principles on which they were based, I volunteered to act as a technical advisor to ensure that references to these would be correct, or at least reasonable.

This last event not only became a cause of further distraction from and delay to the Journal but extended its scope and contents. Further, with a wide field of interest, it was felt that presentation should be improved, taking advantage of the latest word-processors with their superior copy production. Every typewritten script had to be re-worked by volunteers who had the equipment and the skills to use them. (See "Acknowledgement" p.33).

AFW