This issue contains invited papers on the theme of textbooks and dissent first presented at the colloquium held at Dr. Williams’s Library in May 2001. Three of the papers reflect the discipline of the history of science in which their authors work. Bill Brock provides a much-needed account of the Unitarian printer and science textbook publisher, Richard Taylor. Amongst other works Brock traces the publishing history of that most influential and famous of early nineteenth century chemical textbooks – The *Chemical Catechism* by Samuel Parkes (1806). Geoffrey Cantor engages the issue of textbooks and dissent by analysing Quaker attitudes to science publishing. He explores Priscilla Wakefield’s *Botany* (1796) and Maria Hack’s *Harry Beaufoy: or, the Pupil of Nature* (1821) and traces how scientific issues are presented and negotiated within the text. He concludes with some thought-provoking suggestions linking science education and both the social and the theological position of dissenters. David Knight usefully contrasts the focus on dissent with a discussion of what he terms ‘high church science’. He looks at the natural history works of William Swainson and the entomological works of William Kirby and exposes their distinctly ‘Church and Tory character’.

Alison Kennedy tackles the complex theme of the development of historical understanding in the early nineteenth century, through an analysis of a work considered as a textbook of the mythology of Greece – the *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology* translated from the German by John Leitch from the original by Karl Otfried Müller (1825). Kennedy traces the thought of the Unitarian divine, John Kenrick, and his response to Müller’s work in order to explore contemporary debates concerning the relationship between history and myth. Kennedy argues that Müller’s textbook and the varied receptions of it reveal both substantive knowledge of the subject and the shifting intellectual climate in which it was written.

In addition, Peter Isaac provides two useful reports interesting to members involved in bibliographical and book trade research. The first is on the work of the group concerned with the history of the book trade in the North of England and the second is concerned with the progress of the British Book Trade Index. Our Treasurer – Jean Russell-Gebbett has kindly supplied a record of the Colloquium’s accounts and I have given a short obituary notice of one of our members – Mitzi Myers.

There is an issue which, as research group, the Colloquium has to debate. This is the issue of electronic publication and what our position is, with relevance to the continued publication of this journal – *Paradigm*. Those members who currently work in a higher education institution or a library or for some research body, cannot have avoided the proliferation of electronic communication and information delivery systems now currently available. They will have witnessed the explosion of electronic publication. Nigel Hall has kindly agreed to set out some of the relevant arguments and has provided an initial, but very fair, account of the pros and cons of electronic publication for *Paradigm*. You are invited to gm put your views forward and influence the way *Paradigm* might develop in the future. I will hazard a guess that most members would, like me, feel very negative to any suggestion of an electronic-based, at the expense of a paper-based, publication. However, we should not, we cannot, simply avoid the issue – to do so may have the consequences of limiting our audience and ensuring that young researchers never encounter our work. I look forward to your comments – which may provide a source of interest and debate on the pages of future issues.

*John Issitt*