

...the *BDJ* will overcome this period of disquiet precisely because it is so highly regarded, cherished, and prized.

Taking care

This issue is something of a special one. Special for a number of reasons. It has two editorials, one from the outgoing editor and one from the incoming editor-in-chief. It has a carefully crafted opinion article about the history and development of the role of the scientific editors. It has a letter signed by scientific advisors and international editorial board members, with a response from the BDA chief executive. It also has a contents page – so why I am listing these items again?

The sleuths among you will not have been slow to deduce that each item is connected with the happenings over recent months within the BDA, with particular reference to the decisions and actions taken in relation to the *BDJ*. There is anger here, and disappointment; there is frustration and concern; there is confusion and apparent disharmony. Yet there is also one common and crucially important theme that both binds and transcends the quarrels, irrespective of the conscientiously held rights or wrongs of individual points of view. Each writer and every signatory cares. They care for the *BDJ* and it is that which has prompted them to action.

Despite the potential negativity, these expressions of concern in fact represent the most positive sign that the *BDJ* will overcome this period of disquiet precisely because it is so highly regarded, cherished, and prized. What if no one cared? What if the unread pages of volume 197 number 12 were left forlorn and obscured by fallen pine needles below the dying Christmas tree come twelfth night? There would be no future. And rightly so.

The BDA's financial circumstances of earlier in the year necessitated essential and swift action, part of the result of which was to extend the contract of partnership with Nature Publishing Group (NPG). This has been a cooperation of some eight years to date and a collaboration universally agreed to be mutually beneficial. There is every reason to anticipate that the extended agreement will also lead to increasing success. To be clear, under the terms of the agreement the BDA retains ownership of the title (its heritage), the editorial control also remains with the BDA (its right as owner),

the editorial responsibility rests with the editor-in-chief at his desk in 64 Wimpole Street (his expertise), the editorial administration and the production of the Journal managed at NPG offices in Kings Cross (their undoubted, internationally recognised strength). Yes, it is different in part from the situation that pertained this time last year. The world changes, it is different but not necessarily worse and, if we care, we should allow that it may even be better.

This is Mike Grace's last issue as editor but he leaves behind 12 plus years of amazing work and reputation. It was he who introduced NPG into the equation, it was he who brought in electronic publishing, CPD verified papers, the practice section, oversaw the birth of *Vital* the journal for the dental team, and many other innovations and advances. Those of you with large bookshelves or dusty piles of pre-1992 *BDJs* beneath your spare beds, check back and see what our Journal looked like then. No adverse reflection on previous editors, it was of its time but Mike has brought it to our time, and with aplomb, because he cared. We wish him the quieter time he deserves, to read contributions without a deadline and to mark 'typos' without despair.

Mike's legacy will not be squandered, the trust and care of all those who have expressed concern will not be diluted and dismissed. Of that you have my word and my earnest pledge. The robust nature of the scientific papers will be upheld, the quality and value of the *BDJ* will be enhanced for all readers, authors, advertisers and members, and the synergy with the BDA's other regular publications will be strengthened.

I take this opportunity to wish each of you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year and offer the reassurance that I will be listening to you in 2005, and beyond, and I will be working with you and for you. But most of all I will be taking care.

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