

## EDITORIAL

As this is the last time I shall be responsible for our journal, perhaps I may be excused if I let a touch of nostalgia slip into my final editorial.

The Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom was founded with a modest gathering on June 23 1880; and the *Transactions of their first meeting were published the next year, with an inaugural address by the president, Sir William Bowman, followed by a few discursive case reports.* And each year thereafter, a solid green book appeared, with its burden of ambulant and grave communications. The volumes were rather slim during the lean war years, but the succession was kept going through the second world war by Frank Law, who acted as secretary, treasurer and editor for the Society while the members were dispersed and the air raids loomed overhead. When peace broke through, Henry Stallard had taken over as Editor; he was a surgeon of great distinction and a master of prose, but his fastidious approach, so beneficial in the operating theatre, caused problems all along the line; and the reports of our meetings had rather lost their impact when they only surfaced two years later. There was a rumpus; he resigned; and in 1949 I was enrolled in his stead.

My first task was to cull the endless 'discussion comments', which so often consisted of little more than blithe badinage, questions to the speaker, which remained unanswered, or replies to an unreported question. For many years these had been recorded by an elderly scribe, who had coped well enough in those small family gatherings of our early meetings, but was losing the battle in an alien crowd, with jargon he had long given up trying to master. We tried assisting him with a (then novel) recording machine, but the two versions rarely married, and still less the 'improved' rendering which, with hindsight, would trickle in months later, and demand inclusion, and it was thirty years before discussions were finally outlawed.

So, year after year, each spring was heralded by a ponderous new volume, ever stouter than its predecessor. And the only issue which ruffled our editorial meetings was the seven-year itch to seek better value by changing our publisher and printer; the publishers we ultimately jettisoned, but happily the firm of Headley Brothers, who were our printers before I took over, are still going strong.

The wind of change started blowing harder in the Seventies, as meetings proliferated from emergent subspecialties and new societies within the Commonwealth, whom we sought to embrace. Then in 1974, and not without a shaking of traditional heads, we broke up our increasingly clumsy and indigestible annual into four (and subsequently six) issues, largely thanks to Stephen Miller's foresight; so that we emerged as a slim two-monthly journal, increasingly resembling the BJO, (of which he was then editor). This allowed us to be enriched by advertisements, albeit sadly intrusive, and, because of our wider appeal, to be very selective, firmly refereeing each offering. All this was happily lubricated by the administrative and innovative genius of our new technical editor, Margaret Hallendorff. Twelve years later, again after further coaxing of our more traditionalist wing, we assumed the clarion name of EYE, downgrading our time-honoured but prolix name to a sub-title, which we hope will soon be re-worded as the Journal of the College of Ophthalmologists, when as we hope our new-founded College becomes the guardian of our Ophthalmological Society and its journal. But all this will be under the guiding hand of my successor, Peter Watson, who has already been sub-editing part two of each volume—the proceedings of the Cambridge Symposium, which he himself fathered 16 years ago. He may not last another forty years, but for the sake of our journal, the longer the better.

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