EDITORIAL

Happy birthday!

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Editor-in-Chief

The *BDJ* Upfront section includes editorials, letters, news, book reviews and interviews. Please direct your correspondence to the News Editor, Kate Quinlan at k.quinlan@nature.com. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

In all probability, this is not the opening salutation one might normally expect in early January for the first issue of the year. Surely, happy new year! Well, yes, that too most definitely, but happy birthday to the *BDJ* itself as this year represents its 150th anniversary.

This embodies a remarkable achievement, making the *BDJ* the dental journal with the longest continuous print run in the UK, and as far as our research can discover, in the world. Although we wait to be contradicted! We can trace the publication back to 1872 when it was titled, rather non-specifically, *The Monthly Review* edited by James Oakley Coles of the National Dental Hospital as a rival to *The Archives of Dentistry* which was formed in 1864. However, in 1880, the newly formed BDA purchased *The Monthly Review* renaming it the *Monthly Review of Dental Surgery* and branding it as the *Journal of the British Dental Association*, further refining it in 1903 to the now familiar *BDJ*.¹

It is obvious to state that so much has changed in a century and a half, and yet there are some original motivations and principles that are refreshingly familiar to our, admittedly strange, current world. So it was that the first issue of *The Monthly Review* stated: 'Our object is to supply...an organ to adequately represent British Dental Surgery, to protect the interests of the Dental Profession, and to form a medium for the interchange of ideas between its individual members'. Although expressed somewhat differently (keep in mind that, for example, Charles Dickens had died just two years previously), the objective of providing a vehicle for the exchange of ideas is one that we still hold dear, with what we might nowadays describe as science, research and evidence-based dentistry.

Inevitably, the historical content is sometimes quaint, if not quirky, as our scientific knowledge was evolving, as indeed it still is. But it is also reassuring that some matters don't

seem to change that much, such as workforce issues. The 1903 volume reports that 'there were less dental students in 1902 (161) than in 1901 (186) or 1900 (174)'. The high point was apparently 1895 (292). It suggested that unless the number was increased by foreign students and medical practitioners undergoing dental training, the next few years would be lean as far as dental schools were concerned.¹ However, surprisingly ahead of its time, it also included part of an article by Willoughby D. Miller of Berlin on 'Introduction to the study of immunity in relation to the diseases of the mouth and teeth'.

In order to mark the 150th anniversary, we are planning various events, pandemic allowing, for later in the year as well as journal content. In volume 233, from July

in deference to the original thoughts of our Victorian colleagues, sought to extend the broader publication reach into the modern world of communications, notably by online and digital forms. Starting our sister online-only open access publication *BDJ Open* in 2015, this is now thriving and, as we had hoped, providing an essential twenty-first century addition in perhaps the same pioneering spirit of the monthly offering so many decades ago.² The *BDJ* itself is now a 'transformative journal' meaning that if the trend towards open access continues to gain momentum all of its research content too will become open access.³ Again, we have various developments in train to further extend and further improve the content to continue to provide the best in clinical advice to readers.

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2022, we will be republishing 12 papers which we feel have been amongst the most important and influential over the history of the journal, accompanying each with a view from a contemporary expert in the relevant field as to the significance of the piece then and now. A cover series will also commemorate this anniversary, with a specially commissioned illustration for each of the selected archive articles.

However, as the stewards of the journal, we have to be cognisant of not only its history but also its future. In recent years, we have expanded and embellished the *BDJ* to embed it in the *BDJ* Portfolio of six titles spanning students, qualified dentists, researchers and the dental team. Importantly too we have,

One additional feature which was included in the first volume in 1872 was the incorporation of notes from Germany, France and America; an innovative aspect at that time. I am pleased to be able to report that the journal portfolio now reaches virtually every country in the world online on a regular basis. I think our founding fathers would be amazed, but I hope proud too. ■

References

1. Gelbier S. 125 years of developments in dentistry, 1880–2005 Part 1: British dental and other journals. *Br Dent J* 2005; **199**: 389–395.
2. Lewney J. *BDJ Open* (2019–2020) and the advantages of open access publishing. *Br Dent J* 2020; **231**: 713–715.
3. Hancocks S. Transformation. *Br Dent J* 2021; **231**: 65.

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