

## EDITORIAL

# 150 and now onwards

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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](mailto:k.quinlan@nature.com). Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

Age is used as an interesting measure of a variety of qualities. Shakespeare considered this in the seven ages of man through Jacques in *As You Like It*, listing them as: infancy, schoolboy, teenager, young man, middle-aged, old-aged, and dotage and death. Curiously, he is silent on how the scheme relates to dental journals.

I mention this because this year we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *BDJ*, it having first been published in 1872, although on exactly which date no one has been able to ascertain. We have therefore taken the midpoint of the year as a suitable opportunity to launch our marking of this momentous birthday. Such occasions provide the opportunity to look in both directions; back at past achievements and experiences and forward to what may lie ahead. We are taking action on both of these fronts.

Looking back, we have selected 12 papers published in the journal throughout its history which we think have had a significant effect on the art and science of dentistry. These will be reproduced with their full original content. In order to test the robustness of our choices, we have asked an expert to give their opinions on the value of each paper – was it pivotal? Did it have influence? What would have happened if it hadn't been published? Our thanks are due to these stalwart dozen who replied promptly and with a variety of fascinating responses, as you will read throughout this volume. To accompany these papers, we have been fortunate enough to have been able to commission dentist and artist Rachel Jackson to create a cover image to illustrate each one, which will appear with a timeline indicating its place on the continuum. We hope that you will find them of interest and value. Any such choices are subjective and as readers you will doubtless have your own favourite, or favourites, which you consider warrant inclusion. If so, please feel free to contact us from December 2022

onwards when the series concludes, to give us your reasoned thoughts.

We are aware that a lot of the content of the journal then and now is dependent on dental schools and the graduates they produce. So, we have asked the Deans of all 16 undergraduate dental schools in the UK to write a piece on their thoughts about the past and future of dentistry in their schools, in the UK and in the wider world. Their response has been terrific and fascinatingly varied. Thank you to them for enthusiastically joining the *BDJ* in this initiative.

The pace of change in communication, publishing and content has hastened in recent years, and we have been at great pains to keep the journal up to date.



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Looking forward, we have some exciting developments to announce.

Two areas frequently commented on in readers' feedback are volume of information and lack of time to assimilate it. Analysis seems to us to be key in this regard and we are therefore introducing a new 'middle third' to the *BDJ* which we are entitling *BDJ Perspectives*. Beginning in the next issue and running monthly (initially), *BDJ Perspectives*, edited by Professor Avijit Banerjee, will include some current content, such as *Other Journals in Brief*, as well as adding new comment, analysis and opinion to help readers to make sense of today's sometimes bewildering barrage of information.

We will be continuing to bring you all the existing content too including letters, news, features, opinion, world-leading research and clinical content. In the latter, we are pleased to announce that we have teamed up with the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of England to provide a regular series of short articles on different aspects of clinical and academic dentistry, to supplement the other submitted and peer-reviewed clinical content for the oral health care team. This is further introduced in an article in this issue by Martin Cobourne and co-authors.

In the same way that Shakespeare described different ages, so too do we all change the way we announce our chronological age as our lives progress. In our teenage years, we are

keen to emphasise every small advance, as cleverly highlighted in the title of the book *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾*. As middle age envelops us, we tend to err on the downside; 'early thirties' perhaps, or 'not quite at a birthday with a zero on the end'. Then, curiously, as if a boast, a lot of older people keenly tell you what age they'll be *next* year; 'I'm nearly 73' they eagerly inform as perhaps a badge of longevity.

I am not sure where 150 lies on this timeline. Are we 150  $\frac{3}{4}$  'in the mid-hundred area' or '151 next year'? Is the *BDJ* in its infancy still, middle-aged or in its dotage? It is up to you to judge and up to us to keep it vibrant whatever age. Imagine, in the year 2172, we'll be 300. ■

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