

Editorial



JOHN BARTON BOOTH

John Booth is shortly to vacate the editorial chair of the *Journal*, and he will have earned the gratitude of readers and publishers alike for all the efforts he has made in the last five years to improve its standards and maintain its circulation.

After flirting with politics and law in his undergraduate days, he qualified in medicine from King's College Hospital and, after junior hospital posts in Birmingham and London he began to work at the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital in Gray's Inn Road in 1966, subsequently moving down the road to the old Royal Free

Hospital until he was appointed to a consultant post at the London Hospital in 1972.

I have enjoyed his friendship, both at work and at play, for over 20 years and by a stroke of good fortune was invited by him and his wife Carroll to spend my last few years of active clinical practice in their house at 18 Upper Wimpole Street, which thereby became the editorial address of the *Journal* and has remained so until now.

He is a civil consultant in otolaryngology to the Royal Air Force and in that capacity has conducted regular clinics and operating sessions in Cyprus since 1984.

John Booth has been a keen supporter of many of our British Academic conferences in otolaryngology and an active participant in several of them. He was honorary secretary of the general committee for the Eighth conference held in Dublin last year, and following his highly efficient tenure of that office he was recently appointed as chairman of the same committee for the Ninth conference, to be held in Manchester in 1995.

He has made numerous contributions to the specialist literature and he edited the volume on otology in the current (fifth) edition of *Scott-Brown's Otolaryngology*.

He became an Assistant Editor of the *Journal* in 1979 and succeeded me as Editor in 1987. Since that time he has restored some of the features of earlier days and introduced a number of innovations: he has extended his editorial 'board' to a team of six Assistant Editors, with new specialist advisors in Audiology, Radiology and Statistics, thus augmenting the highly prized contributions of the ever youthful Advisor in Pathology, Imrich Friedmann—who has recently celebrated his 85th birthday!

He has changed the format; in a modified form he has brought back an occasional selection of abstracts; he has instituted book reviews and letters to the Editor; and most important of all, he has re-established the enviable reputation enjoyed throughout most of its existence for the exceptional quality of its illustrations.

A keen opera-goer, when he has the time, John Booth holds honorary appointments with the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Royal Society of Musicians and the Musicians Benevolent Fund.

He is an enthusiastic golfer and a keen supporter of England's national summer game—some of our readers may recognize the tie in his portrait! I have spent many happy hours as his guest at Lord's cricket ground, the global headquarters of that game, watching our national side trying to extricate itself from apparently hopeless situations created by visiting test teams; and not even a whole day spent under umbrellas did anything to dampen our appreciation of Carroll's beautifully prepared picnics, with sandwiches of fresh and smoked salmon, washed down with chilled white wine.

Whatever sorrow I may feel at John Booth's departure, it is mitigated by the knowledge that his place will be taken by another good friend of mine, Neil Weir, and I hope this will give pleasure to my own predecessor, Sir Geoffrey Bateman, with whom he once worked at St Thomas' Hospital.

He has been an Assistant Editor for several years and amongst many literary contributions his most important to date has been his *Otolaryngology, an illustrated history*, published in 1990, forty years after the last comprehensive history of our specialty.

Five years ago, following a trekking holiday in Nepal with his wife, Sue, they set up the so-called Britain-Nepal Otolaryngology Service, known as BRINOS, a charitable organization through which they have conducted—and continue to conduct—pioneering 'ear camps' for the treatment of Nepalese subjects suffering from ear disease and hearing defects and for the training of local otologists in the management of these sadly neglected patients.

A skilled painter and sculptor, Neil Weir has been a very active member of the Medical Art Society for many years and for three years he was its president. I am sure that he will bring all his skills to this new commitment.

Thank you, John.

Welcome, Neil

JOHN BALLANTYNE

A change in editorship often provokes a variety of mixed feelings. 'I have just become used to the style of the *Journal*, now I suppose everything is going to change' and 'why change for change's sake?' John Booth has made a great contribution to the *Journal* over the last five years. Under his care it has thrived; new features such as 'Pathology and Radiology in Focus' have appeared and the regular features of book reviews, abstracts and letters to the editor have been re-introduced.

Should the *Journal*, whilst retaining its academic status, be more generally readable? I welcome your comments. I am interested, too, to know how our many international contributors and subscribers feel about the *Journal*. Do we satisfy their needs?

I propose from next month to introduce monthly review editorials of general interest. There will be a column for ENT surgeons in training and there will be a return of the obituaries which not only pay respect to our past colleagues but are an essential source for medical historians.

Above all, I hope that more ENT surgeons will wish to read their own copy of the *Journal*, will welcome its arrival at their breakfast table and will at a glance find something of interest to them.

NEIL WEIR