

VALETE

Thirty-nine years is a long spell to be associated with one title. Such a time span had not been envisaged when in 1951 a raw young man, at the instigation of the dean of his school of pharmacy, applied for the post of editorial assistant on the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology*. A three year appointment, a term much favoured as not involving the Society in long-term expenses, was more in the mind of the then Secretary and Registrar, F. W. Adams. The Journal was only two years into monthly publication, but had its roots in the *Yearbook of Pharmacy* begun in 1870 which was to be succeeded by the *Quarterly Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology* in 1928.

Arriving an hour late at the Society's House in Bloomsbury on a foggy morning in October did not seem a propitious beginning for the new assistant and must have looked a bad investment to the editor, Dr C. H. Hampshire. He was a man of considerable stature with the reputation of having a fearful temper so that initially the young assistant was too scared to ask to leave the office. This was sited temporarily in a museum room which the Journal staff shared with numerous specimens, including a stuffed musk deer in a glass case and a desiccated alligator much the worse for wear.

At that time, the first nine issues of the Journal each contained a review article and a handful of the sixty or so papers received each year along with innumerable abstracts, many of which were prepared or edited by the assistant. The last three issues contained the full papers presented at the British Pharmaceutical Conference with the discussions on them. Hampshire proved to be a most kindly man whose main interests were the Journal and his chairmanship of the WHO committee responsible for the International Pharmacopoeia, a number of tasks relating to which also fell to the assistant, including the invention of non-proprietary names.

In 1955, on Hampshire's impending retirement, which unfortunately he did not live to enjoy, the editorship was taken up by the Reader in Pharmacology at King's College,

University of London, Dr George Brownlee, who was soon to become professor of his own department. It was he who imbued the now slightly wiser editorial assistant with the basic requirements for handling scientific reporting and editing that have been the basis of the management of the Journal since. He also guided the assistant's intellectual approach and gave him the opportunity to benefit from regular contact with one of the best departments of pharmacology in the country. In 1957, that assistant became assistant editor and took on the increasing responsibility that prepared him for the post of editor to which he acceded in 1972.

By that time the Journal had changed format twice and was receiving over 500 submissions a year. In 1988, the format was changed again, this time to A4 size carrying four times as many words a page as the 1950s' Journal. Also dramatically changed over those years were the topics and their complexity and the nature of the British Pharmaceutical Conference, the transactions of which now formed a supplement to the Journal. The method of production, too, moved with the times from hot metal to offset litho plates of computer set material.

The 1990s offer a different set of challenges to the new editor, Dr Joseph Chamberlain, which he and his team will relish overcoming, no doubt continuing with the Brownlee dictum that 'this is an experimental journal and we will continue to experiment'. May he have every success!

This retiring editor has had the privilege of corresponding with, and often meeting, many hundreds of expert referees and thousands of authors. He also has had the unstinting support of staff, colleagues and members of the Editorial Board. To all of these 'contributors' he extends his grateful thanks for the efforts they have made to keep the Journal in the forefront of publications in the pharmaceutical sciences.

JOHN FOWLER