LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEW FORMAT OF THE JOURNAL

From Lord Taylor

Sir,
Congratulations on the new format. It is first-class. What is more, it tempted me to read John Fry's Mackenzie Lecture within half an hour of receipt of the *Journal,* and I found I was reading one of the very best pieces of work I have struck in the last 18 months.

I hope you go on getting good contributions—on which I know you depend. The new presentation should encourage them.

TAYLOR

Plas-y-Garth
Glyn Geiriog
Near Llangollen
N. Wales.

Sir,
The picture on the inside cover of your new *Journal* of the depressed doctor waiting for a dose of nitrazepam sums up my feelings of your attempts to put the *Journal* on a sound financial basis.

In my opinion advertisements in medical journals should always be on separate pages when placed amongst articles. This has a double advantage; the articles can be read easily and removed for filing without being mixed up with advertising matter, and the journal can be filed, after the removal of the separate advertisement pages, without wasting space.

STEPHEN PASMORE

90½ Lexham Gardens
London W8 6HQ.

Sir,
May I congratulate you on the new format for the *Journal.* I have been suffering from a chronic guilt complex about my disinclination to read the old one, and I am sure this will help a lot.

COLIN SMITH

Higham
Rochester
Kent.

Sir,
The college *Journal* has until now been in the best tradition of medical publications in that it has had a discrete amount of advertising material outwith editorial content. I was horrified to find, on opening the January issue, that the format has been radically altered and that advertising matter was now firmly in the body of the *Journal* interspersed with normal articles, detracting from these and making it no longer possible to remove such advertisements before binding.

I feel that mere commercial considerations have been allowed to interfere with the production of a dignified journal. It seems a pity that the College should descend to the standard of those publications run as commercial ventures, and sent out free, unsolicited, and unwanted, to general practitioners.

G. M. THOMAS

70 John Street
Workington
Cumberland.

Sir,
The revised *Journal* design and format are appreciated. What did startle me was the contents of this professional publication being visible to all and sundry through the flimsy transparent cover. Certainly the *Journal* is better flat than rolled like the *British Medical Journal,* which carries its contents on the cover too, but you ought to obscure that outer cover, or leave the index to page one.

I have always felt that the use of the full Christian names of people mentioned in the *Journal* would be more appropriate in certain categories—such as admission to the college membership, or in a death or obituary notice. The unadorned initial letter(s) is cold, convenient, but lacking in dignity. I will admit, however, that the October list of new members was so well set out in face and space that the use of the men's Christian initial(s) was adequate. The full name to my mind carries a *cachet*—making tribute to the member.

I was interested to find your address modestly placed at the tail-end of the back cover, but it is a pity that the college address has to be winkled out of the text on page 47. Since the *Journal* reasonably claims the cover and the first two pages, the College address could well be shown at the top of the news section on page 47.

With good wishes for the *Journal's* continuing welfare.

JAMES A. LISTER

27 Victoria Road
Burnside
Glasgow G73 3QF.

Sir,
I preferred the format and size of the earlier *Journals;* the new larger *Journal* doesn't appear as clear and the overall presentation is not as pleasing to my eye.

PHILIP RUTLEDGE

8 Spottiswoode Street
Edinburgh EH9 1ER.

Sir,
Your new format (A4 size) is a great improvement. Already it seems more interesting and easier to read.

C. D. CAMPBELL

The Roses
Waddesdon
Aylesbury HP18 0JF
Bucks.

Sir,
My feelings about the new format of the *Journal* may be summed up as: "Me no likey"! And why? For the very obvious reason that it has become merely another vehicle to promote the products of the drug industry. Just count the number, type, presentation, and positioning of the advertisements and you will see what I mean.

I regret the the *Journal* will now go straight into the refuse basket in the same way as the other 36 unsolicited publications that descend on to my desk with monotonous regularity every month *ad nauseam.*

The College up to now could always resist a charge of venality but this change is but the first step in loss of independence. Get back on the right course before it is too late.

HUGH W. FORSHAW

14 North View
Liverpool L7 8TS.

COLLEGE EVIDENCE

Sir,
The College's evidence to the Royal Commission on the NHS is published in this issue of the *Journal* (p. 197). Members will see when they read it that it differs in some important respects from the discussion paper on which it is based.

Nearly 8,000 copies of the discussion document were circulated through the *Journal* to all members and associates. In the event the response has been substantial, constructive, critical, and altogether immensely helpful. It is the