THE MEDICAL RECORDING SERVICE FOUNDATION

LIKE many of the other college departments, the Medical Recording Service Foundation began, in 1957, as a 'cottage industry' in the home of its founders and honorary directors, Drs John and Valerie Graves. Its object was to help members keep up to date with postgraduate medicine, and in its first year of operation 25 doctors listened to 12 recordings.

The formula of lending tape recordings illustrated with colour transparencies was an immediate success, and the service was soon extended, at a small fee, to non-members. Within a few years over 400 small discussion groups had been established.

The growth of the Medical Recording Service Foundation has been, and still is, remarkable. In 1962 the Graves appointed the first two full-time staff, a librarian and a secretary. Between them these four undertook all the work of recording, copying, dispatch and dealing with correspondence, learning as they went along, and evolving techniques for this unique library.

The Recording Service became a Foundation in 1970 and is responsible to a Board which has a majority of College members, and representatives from the Department of Health and Social Security, medical schools, nursing services, and overseas organisations. Sir George Godber has just become Chairman succeeding Dr Talbot Rogers.

The demand for tapes has increased steadily so that by 1973 there was a staff of 17 working in the library, office, illustration and recording departments. In addition travelling representatives visit hospital and university libraries and postgraduate medical centres to demonstrate audiovisual techniques, and explain the work of the Recording Service. The keynote of the service is simplicity and economy and much of its popularity has been due to the swift same-day service.

The number of loans made from the tapeslide library has quadrupled from 5,000 in 1965 to 20,000 in 1973—a formidable achievement and a tribute to the ingenuity and hard work of the directors and staff at Kitts Croft.

There are currently 840 titles available on loan or sale, for individual self-instruction or small group study. A free catalogue, available on request, lists all the titles and new topics are regularly announced in the *Journal*. A study booth has been established at Princes Gate and a tape-of-the-month is available to members from the librarian.

A further service offered is illustration. This department can both advise on and design artistic and attractive illustrations for use in lectures and exhibitions.

Who uses this service? Surveys indicate that there is a wide variety of borrowers, including every kind of medical and paramedical worker, and also lay people involved, for example, in health education. The subjects of the tapes are as diverse as the listeners, and the MRSF co-operates with other specialised organisations in the production and distribution of tapes.

An important new venture has been the copying of tapes originally broadcast by the BBC, on community care for nurses. It is hoped that this will set a precedent for the future.

As the Medical Recording Service evolves, it attracts visitors and enquiries from all over the world. The future programme is one of continued expansion and development. New links are being forged, and the years ahead will no doubt prove fruitful and exciting. The Graves can be proud of their brainchild.