

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Why News and Views? Complement and contrast

Informative, provocative, lively and stimulating should be appropriate adjectives for *News and Views*—a complement and contrast to the Original Papers Section of the *Journal*. What do you, the College member, feel is its purpose and how should *News and Views* be improved?

**I**t is of considerable interest and importance that the Editor be made aware of the views and wishes of the membership. The constructive and critical letter from Dr Michael Varnam, printed below, is welcomed.

In order to stimulate discussion and controversy we have set out some thoughts and ideas concerning our perceived aims. Peter Stott aptly stated that 'the College has nothing to offer members but the opportunity for involvement and the opportunity to do something for themselves' (*February Journal*, p.114). *News and Views* provides such a possibility: a means by which members may speak, faculties communicate and the College centrally inform and be informed.

More information from Princes Gate must be effectively, accurately and speedily reported to the membership. Is a 'resident' but 'independent' journalist needed at Princes Gate to seek out the news from College Officers? We cannot compete with the weekly newspapers but at monthly intervals time can be given for mature reflection on recent events using unimpeachable sources for our information!

What of resources? The *Journal* is about to undertake its own publishing arrangements. The deadline for some of our pages is now nearer the issue date so we shall be able to print some late news. Should the *Journal* continue to be funded by advertising? Although a few articles in this section are commissioned, we are dependent upon members' contributions. Your letters are welcomed and we would particularly like to hear your comments about *News and Views* and ways in which you wish to see your 'College Newspaper' improved.

R. MICHAEL J. PRICE  
Editor, *News and Views*

### The College Journal

Sir,  
To paraphrase someone else's introduction 'We are worried about our *Journal* in this faculty'. I am writing on behalf of our board to express our

anxiety and to suggest if not the answers at least some of the questions which we feel should be considered.

The role of editor is not an enviable one and so in true Pendleton style the plaudits come first! The continuing expansion of *News and Views* is welcomed. The style is lighter, more informative, questioning, and encourages the reader to read. We feel, however, there is one major item of omission—the College itself. Working party reports are published and a skimpy account of Council meetings is given but this is often in little more detail than to list the names of individuals who presented papers to Council. Why not take College members into your confidence and produce reasoned argument for and against some of the more important items being discussed? We do not consider that this would inhibit the Council's deliberations and it would have the advantage of improving communication between Council and members. If such a change were implemented it would make it easier for faculties and their members to respond intelligently to requests from the Council for information or action.

The major part of the *Journal* remains the section on original research. The important aim of the College is to improve the care of patients through the work of individual members. Our faculty board believes most strongly that the *Journal* must continue, but what role is it expected to play in developing the care of our patients? I am sure that the editorial board have clearly defined aims for the *Journal* but it is not obvious on reading the articles what these might be. Some seem overlong and boring while others are based on little scientific evidence. We believe that the *Journal* should publish the results of good research (not just audit) that is readable without being trivialized. We would like to see more articles in each edition, perhaps covering a wider subject range.

We know that the hardworking editorial board is already trying to do this and we would encourage them to redouble their efforts. We also hope that they plan a new development in com-

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missioning and publishing good quality review articles on some of the major issues facing primary care. Other journals provide reviews mainly on topics not immediately relevant to the general practitioner, or of such brevity as part of long series that they do little more than 'fly a kite'. We would not advocate following the same path.

In publishing this letter you have indicated your concern to improve the

*Journal*. Our faculty hopes that others will be encouraged to write to the editor. A question I ask myself whenever I read a journal is, 'In what way should I behave differently in my care of patients as a result of reading this issue?' Before behaviour can be changed we have to be encouraged to read!

I know that no editor expects every article to be studied with the same

enthusiasm by all those who receive the *Journal*. Our faculty board believes that if these and other ideas were implemented more College members would carefully study a greater number of articles—and who knows, we might change as a result.

MICHAEL VARNAM

*Provost and Chairman of  
Vale of Trent Faculty Board*

## COLLEGE NEWS

### Summary of Council Meeting

The fourth meeting of the 1984 Council took place on 16 June 1984. Dr Donald Irvine was in the chair. It was a sultry summer's day and across Hyde Park Trooping the Colour was taking place. It was therefore appropriate that the President should be able in opening the meeting to announce the award of the OBE to Dr J. C. Hasler, the immediate past Honorary Secretary of Council.

In spite of the high temperature, Council remained in good humour whilst tackling an agenda of considerable length with over thirty related documents to consider, the whole package of papers weighing 1½ lbs.

#### *Matters Arising from the Third Meeting of 1984 Council*

*Irish College.* Dr William Shannon spoke of the foundation Council Meeting of the Irish College which had taken place on 28 May 1984. He thanked the College for the practical help it had given in establishing the new college and looked forward to continuing cooperation between the two bodies. A liaison group is continuing to meet to consider practical and technical aspects of future collaboration. Professor James McCormick hoped that one tangible way for close contact to be maintained between the two colleges would be for as many doctors as possible to become members of both organizations.

The Northern Ireland Faculty of the RCGP had discussed their own status at their Annual General Meeting on 19 April 1984. They had unanimously agreed that they should continue unchanged as a full faculty of the RCGP and not become a constituent faculty of the new Irish College. The members of the Northern Ireland Faculty supported the concept of establishing the new college and hoped to maintain friendly links with it.

*Deputizing Services.* In contrast to the previous Council debate on this issue, comments were few and unemotional. Emphasis was given to the need for reliable information about all aspects of out-of-hours care. The Chairman reminded Council of the government's intention to give responsibility for supervising deputizing services to the new independent family practitioner committees.

*President's Report.* Dr John Lawson reported on his recent meetings. He highlighted his visit to Ballymoney in Northern Ireland when he gave the Eli Lilly lecture, and his meeting with the President and executive members of the National Rubella Campaign. These were just two out of numerous meetings and visits which he had undertaken as the representative of the College. It was clear from the report of the meetings undertaken by the President on behalf of the College, that the workload of the presidency is high and increasing.

#### *Reports from Faculties*

*New Cumbria Faculty.* Council received a letter from Dr A. R. Horne, Honorary Secretary of the Cumbria Sub-Faculty and was pleased to accept in principle the creation of the new Cumbria Faculty which will take effect after the usual consultation with adjoining faculties.

*Severn Faculty Report on Quality of Care Initiative for the Elderly.* Dr Michael Whitfield presented the report to Council for consideration on behalf of his faculty. He said that a high priority should be given to care of the elderly by the College. He drew attention to the deserved emphasis given by the College to child care in recent publications on prevention and hoped that the care of the elderly would be similarly considered. Although in general the report was well received and

several speakers supported the view that the College should highlight the health needs of the elderly, it was questioned whether the report should have been submitted in its present form direct to Council. It was felt that the Severn Faculty had identified an extremely important area of care in which improvements are both possible and necessary. Other faculties were encouraged to set priorities for themselves in a similar fashion. The Chairman pointed out that the report had been submitted in the context of the Quality of Care initiative and hoped that the Severn Faculty and other faculties would continue to report to Council on initiatives that they had undertaken in improving the quality of care.

#### *Quality Initiative*

Dr Ian McNamara gave a progress report on the number of projects that had been undertaken by Council members. Council gave consideration to the form in which the Council members' work would ultimately be presented. It was agreed that this paper should concentrate on the principles and methods employed in the individual studies so that doctors could learn from each other's experience. As the next stage in sharing information about their projects, Council members will attend a study day immediately before the next Council meeting.

Although confidentiality of the source of information in any final report will be preserved, individual Council members would be free to publish the results of their own investigations should they so wish.

It was envisaged that the present commitment by Council members would continue and Dr Paul Freeling expressed the hope that, in future, efforts would be made to standardize the way in which information is collected so that the results can be as valid as possible. Similarly, the possibility of