

The history of the Journal and the Institute of Naval Medicine

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The Editorial of Volume 34 (1948), “edited by the staff of the Royal Naval Medical School”, opened with a “word of explanation about the present position of the Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service ... It will be recalled that prior to the outbreak of war the Editors of the Journal were the Professors of Medicine and Surgery at R.N. Hospital, Haslar. When the “batch” system ceased and the Professors went as divisional Senior Medical Officers to R.N. Hospital, Barrow Gurney, they continued to edit the Journal from there; but when this hospital closed down towards the end of 1946, the editorial duties devolved on S.M.O. (M) and S.M.O. (S) at R.N. Hospital, Haslar. It is anticipated that about the middle of 1948, when the new R.N. Medical School opens at Monckton House, Alverstoke, Gosport, the office of the Journal will find a new and permanent home there under the editorship of the Staff of the School.”

Volume 34 was rather slim, perhaps no wonder, and in 1949 there was no Editorial until the second issue, although an air of relief may be guessed at on reading the words “At last we have managed to publish the Journal up to time.” For the next few years Editorials moved from issue to issue, at least one year generating no Editorial at all, although that for Volume 38, No. 2 (Spring 1952) will sound familiar: “the task of publishing this Journal has become increasingly difficult ... greatly increased production costs, loss of revenue from subscribers ... Increase in subscription rates or allowing the Journal to become an official Admiralty publication were considered but, for various reasons, were rejected ... the amalgamation of our Journal with that of the Royal Army Medical Corps, merited further investigation...” The Editorial of the following year reported that this option was rejected “for lack of support”, and that the general situation had improved.

The Journal’s 50th volume brought some changes; the first number of the year was dated Spring 1964 (previously the first number of the year had been Winter) and, in the third (Autumn) number, “Edited by the staff of the RNMS” was replaced by “Editorial Committee”, otherwise: Surgeon Captain S. Miles, Surgeon Commander (D) W.E. Starkey and Mrs J.K. Reynolds. In 1966 the Professor of Naval Surgery and the Professor of Naval Medicine joined the committee; from 1967, upon the promotion to Surgeon Rear Admiral of Stanley Miles, the Editorial Committee returned with him to RNH Haslar, only to move back in 1969 with SRA James Watt (SRA (INM) and Dean of Medicine) as Editor. SRA Miles took advantage of his final

Editorial on retirement “to say how much I have enjoyed leading the Editorial Team for the past eight years and thank them and, in particular, Mrs Joan Reynolds, for their patient and encouraging support”.

The Editorial Committee retained the same composition of appointments in addition to the Editor, *viz.* the Professors of Naval Medicine and Surgery, the head of the Dental Service, and Mrs Reynolds now recorded as Editorial Secretary. SRA Watt wrote an Editorial for every issue, a lead still followed by most editors since.

In the Editorial for Spring 1972, SRA Watt wrote “In the Journal of April 1947 Surgeon Rear Admiral Mussen concluded his history of the Royal Naval Medical School with the observation that the School ‘should be an institute where research is done and encouraged but, even more importantly, where the advances in knowledge are brought to the ordinary officer whether he be medical or not’. He would therefore be gratified to find the enthusiasm which exists today for research, not only in the physiological and highly technical fields of naval medicine, but also in the clinical specialities. It is a task of the new Institute to disseminate the knowledge thus gained through its publications and postgraduate teaching programmes.” In the Summer issue of that year (SRA Watt’s last as Editor), on page 146, is a picture of Head Naval Nurse Mrs Jean Reynolds, marking the award to her of the British Empire Medal. Mrs Reynolds continued as Editorial Secretary until Spring 1978, when her place was taken by Mrs Joan McLean.

By 1989 the Editorial Committee list printed on the title page of the Journal was nine-strong, as new divisions arrived at INM and Heads of Division were co-opted into service. As the Defence Medical Services edged closer together, the Editorial in Volume 80 No. 2 (Summer 1994) finished on a high note: “... your Journal, known affectionately and for no apparent reason as the Guffer’s Gazette, can play its part in assuring the health and prosperity of the Royal Naval Medical Service.” In the same number, the list of the Editorial Committee was banished to the last page, and from then on one person was visibly responsible for the Journal: INM’s Medical Officer in Charge, who might or might not append his name to the Editorial. In 1998, the Editorial Committee changed its name to the Managing Committee, with the MOIC as Chairman and Editor. Through the years many an editorial reflects upon the difficulties of financing the Journal, of sustaining interest in it, and of the need to maintain a high standard of content

and production. In one number, Volume 87 No.1 (2001), the number of contributions was so low that the Editor, MOIC Surgeon Commodore Nick Baldock, inserted the full text of *Regulations and Instructions, for the Medical Officers of His Majesty's Fleet* (1825), all 75 pages, partly to bulk out the journal and partly to preserve and disseminate the book to a wider readership.

The list of Editors of the Journal follows faithfully the list of appointees as Deans of Naval Medicine and Medical Officers In Charge of INM, until December 2015, when Surgeon Captain Mike Howell handed over the Editorship to Surgeon Captain Jason Smith, with whom it still remains. Since then, those in command of INM have maintained a continuing relationship with the Journal.

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