Editorial

Sixty years young—a Diamond Jubilee

'The fields indeed are white unto harvest; the husbandmen are ready and skilful; the workers of bygone days hand on to them the sickle and wish them good luck and God speed. 'He that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together'.

With these stirring words Sir Thomas Barlow introduced the first edition of the Archives of Disease in Childhood in 1926. We are proud to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee and though there may be some pedantic paediatricians who will point out that we ought to be celebrating our 82nd birthday, rather than our 60th, since the British Journal of Children's Diseases, which amalgamated with us in 1944, began in 1904, nevertheless, we are content merely to celebrate our Diamond Jubilee today (for whoever has heard of having a special party for their 82nd birthday!).

Birthdays are times for looking back as well as forwards and in this issue we have invited some of our distinguished colleagues and members of the Editorial Committee to share our indulgence. In the mirror of the past we sometimes see the present more clearly.

We know that anniversaries are also a time for taking stock and that is what our Editorial Committee will do most seriously. Changes that will occur and that we hope will be beneficial for the Journal, however, should be gradual because the progress of our Journal has been steady and sure. We understand those who criticise the title, maintaining that Archives sounds old fashioned—dusty tombs in Vatican vaults—and that the rest of the title emphasises disease too much in these days when there should be more interest in disease prevention and in maintenance of child health. Nevertheless, the name of our Journal means something important to many people and when a speaker at a paediatric meeting refers to work that appeared in 'The Archives' everyone knows what that means and also the implied standard. The Archives has grown considerably from those early days 60 years ago: four times as many pages each year and a far greater international circulation. We are proud that the Archives has maintained its position within the top four for impact in the international Science Citation Index for paediatric articles (meaning that if an article is published in our Journal it has an extremely large chance of being read and quoted in a subsequent paediatric article in another international journal). Long may this be so, for it is a reflection of the high standards of those who do research and submit their work to us and of those who assess the papers.

Modern technology may seem a threat to scientific journals; but it is also an ally. Three years ago, and three years before Fleet Street, we changed from compositor set 'hot metal' type to computer setting. Last year we became the first specialist United Kingdom medical journal to be put on the American based Bibliographic Retrieval Services, which provides a data storage and computer retrieval service for journals. That itself was a recognition of our status as a core journal in the international medical literature, and it is that status that we believe will enable us to work with future advances in technology rather than be submerged by them. You cannot fight against the future, and 60 years gone, with even more to come, are on our side.

Anniversaries are a time for thanksgiving, and as Editors we thank our contributors, our hardworking referees whom we name on page 987, our loyal staff, and you our readers.

The cover pictures
Upper – Master Thomas R of Britain in 1926.
Lower – Miss K Piper of Europe in 1986.
(The photograph of Thomas R appeared on page 168 of the first volume in an article 'A case of Hypertelorism'.)